World Health Organization

National Health Workforce Accounts

Better data and evidence on health workforce

What is the National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA)?

The NHWA is a system by which countries progressively improve the availability, quality, and use of health workforce data through monitoring of a set of indicators to support achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other health objectives.

The purpose of the NHWA is to facilitate the standardization and interoperability of health workforce information.

The NHWA defines standardized indicators to:
- generate reliable human resources for health (HRH) information and evidence;
- enable planning, implementation and monitoring of workforce policies towards UHC; and
- improve comparability of health workforce data nationally and globally.

Relevance: Why would a country engage in the NHWA?

The NHWA is relevant for national, regional and global stakeholders. In particular, it enables countries to better collect, analyse and use their health workforce (HWF) data to develop evidence-based policies and plans and to support global monitoring, including SDGs, UHC and other important global commitments.

National

- Better understanding of the HWF characteristics, including its size and distribution.
- Strengthened human resources for health information system (HRHIS) routinely generating high-quality information and evidence to guide policy decisions according to country needs.
- Promote intersectoral policy dialogue among relevant stakeholders (e.g. ministries of health, education and finance, professional associations, training institutions, academia).
- Inform priority investments needed to strengthen HWF and support UHC.

Regional and Global

- Strengthened comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of HRH data over time.
- Fostered cross-country support for data collection.
- Documentation and sharing of experiences and good practices.
- Systematic research on health system developments and resilience planning.

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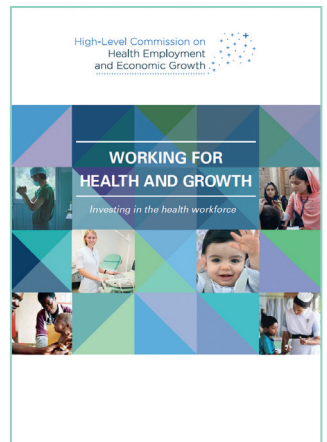## Rationale: Policy frameworks, mandate and context of the NHWA

The SDG target 3.c. aims to "substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce..." with specific indicator on HWF density and distribution. Accurate and timely HWF information and evidence will inform not only SDG 3 on health but also other SDGs such as 4, 5, 8 and 10 of the Agenda 2030.
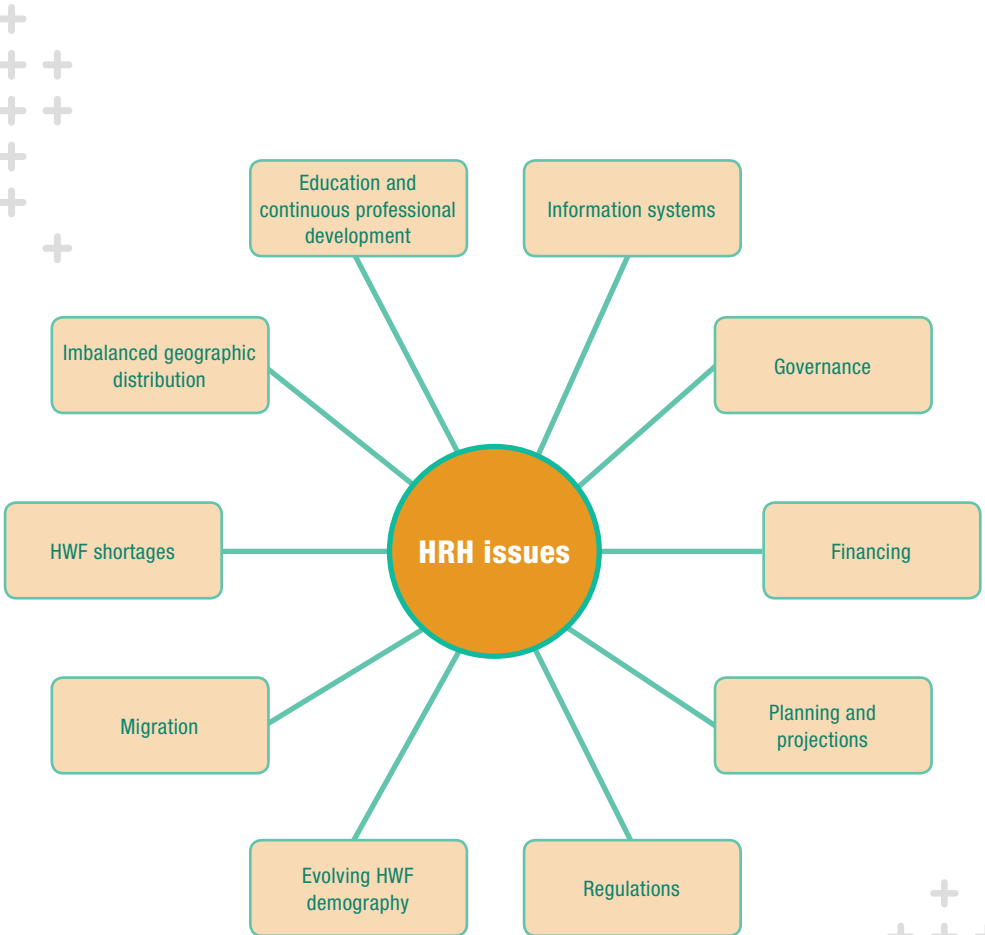
WHO and its partners developed the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 (GSHRH) to accelerate progress towards UHC and the SDGs by ensuring equitable access to health workers within strengthened health systems. In May 2016, the sixty-ninth World Health Assembly (WHA) endorsed the GSHRH by adopting resolution 69.19 urging Member States to strengthen HRH data and evidence with annual reporting to the Global Health Observatory and progressive implementation of the NHWA.

The report of the High-Level Commission for Health Employment and Economic Growth, adopted by the WHA resolution 70.6, recommends strengthening of HWF data, information and accountability by using harmonized metrics and methodologies, urging countries to accelerate the progressive implementation and reporting of the National Health Workforce Accounts.

Key HRH issues at country level

- Education and continuous professional development
- Information systems
- Imbalanced geographic distribution
- Governance
- HWF shortages
- **HRH issues**
- Financing
- Migration
- Planning and projections
- Evolving HWF demography
- Regulations

The NHWA can inform and optimize planning to address identified HRH issues by answering key policy questions, including:

How to improve planning through better alignment of HWF production and needs?

How can the HRH challenges be addressed by better resources allocation?

How to monitor and address HWF migration?

How to address geographical imbalances and improve access in underserved areas?

Can the national production of health workers replace the losses caused by exits, such as retirement, mortality and migration?

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Why health labour market framework approach?

The concept of the NHWA is closely aligned with the health labour market framework for UHC (Sousa et al. 2013). This framework provides a comprehensive picture of health labour market domains such as education, labour market dynamics, financing, governance, policies and regulation.