



World Health
Organization
Western Pacific Region

HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH Action Framework for the Western Pacific Region (2011–2015)



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1. BACKGROUND



1.1 PURPOSE

Many health systems in the Western Pacific Region remain beset by a health workforce crisis: absolute shortages of qualified health workers; inequitable distribution of workers and inefficient skill mix; training and education poorly matched to patient and population needs; and financial constraints with poor motivation and retention in most lesser-resourced countries.

The *Regional Strategy on Human Resources for Health (2006–2015)*, endorsed in resolution WPR/RC57.R7 by the WHO Regional Committee in 2006, guided the collaborative actions of WHO and Member States in strengthening health workforce responsiveness to population health needs through enhanced health system performance and service quality.

These actions included strengthening of national human resource strategic planning and human resources for health (HRH) information systems; reviews and updating of regulatory systems; initiatives addressing the quality and relevance of health professional education; analyses of policy options for rural and remote retention in selected countries, along with publication of global evidence-based policy recommendations on the same issue; and the formulation and dissemination of subregional and global codes of practice for the international recruitment of health workers.

Despite this progress, there remains an urgent need for intensified, collaborative and multisectoral HRH actions to improve universal coverage and access to quality health services in order to reduce population health inequities and achieve better health outcomes for all.

1.2 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Many countries face similar challenges in providing equitable access to quality health services for all and improving health outcomes. A sufficient health workforce, adequately prepared and equitably distributed, is necessary for creating strong health systems. However, developing and maintaining an equitably distributed, competent and effective health workforce is an ongoing struggle for many countries, requiring innovative, collaborative and comprehensive national and international planning and strategic actions.

The Western Pacific Region is making better progress towards the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDG) than other WHO regions. However, progress is unequally spread within and between countries, with rural and poor populations lagging behind. Progress towards achievement of MDG 4 and 5 targets, reduced child mortality and improved maternal health, requires a multi-dimensional approach to service delivery, incorporating core HRH elements, integrated with information management systems, essential medicines, equipment and technologies, financing, service delivery, leadership and governance.^{1,2}

The Region also grapples with mounting negative effects of climate change, health risks, ongoing natural disasters and other public health

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