

Statement by Medicus Mundi International to the 69th session of the World Health Assembly on agenda item 16.1 Health workforce and services

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the World Health Assembly on behalf of MMI and PHM.

Governments have the core responsibility for education and employment in the health sector and the ultimate accountability to ensure the human right to health through universal access to health care, founded on availability, affordability, acceptability and quality. There is intrinsic value in a competent workforce in improving health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and assuring the right to health.

We appreciate the Secretariat reports and especially welcome the draft Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 and accompanying resolution. But we want to share some comments and concerns.

The draft global strategy is not explicit enough on implementation.

The document fails to address the crucial question of the nature of the health system in which health workers provide care. There is enough evidence to show that the best health outcomes are reached through investment in public health systems.

We urge MS to include an implementation, governance and financing mechanism in the strategy that does not leave the expansion and allocation of health workforce to the labour market but gives a clear role to the public sector in health workforce, education, development, distribution and management in health care provision.

Fiscal policies should not place limitation to public sector expenditure in this field. The Right to Health is a right of all citizens and all MSs have a duty to assist other governments, technically and/or financially to ensure its full realisation. We urge MSs to ensure that economic governance arrangements and fiscal space enables the development of a strong national health workforce, including investment in strengthening health worker training institutions, as a long-term investment in the wellbeing of the people and the economy of a country.

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