

6.4 Promoting the health of refugees and migrants

We take note of the Draft Global Action Plan, 2019–2023 presented by the DG.

Given the magnitude and consequences of forced global displacement, we believe this issue deserved greater attention and a more rapid response from WHO.

We commend WHO for developing a plan that intends to protect the health of refugees and migrants through strengthening the PHC systems while also recognising the precarious position of migrants as workers. However, the report does not provide any clarity on how this will be achieved, especially in light of the financial challenges WHO is currently facing.

In addition, while the document refers to Social Determinants of Health of refugees and migrants, it ignores some of the most important structural causes of migration, such as ongoing humanitarian crises and deepening economic inequalities. The document fails to address the responsibility of some HICs, who disregard existing international agreements and compacts on migration and violate basic human rights by preventing refugees from entering their borders or denying them access to healthcare.

We urge WHO to remind MS of their duty to uphold the universal human rights of migrants for access to healthcare by instituting changes in domestic law and policy, and to ensure that migrants are included in national and local health planning.

We also take this opportunity to express our concern about WHO's focus on Health information systems and data collection. We believe that such information has the potential to be abused against the interests of refugees and migrants and also negatively affect their health-seeking behaviour. Therefore we insist WHO and MS rather focus on strengthening health systems and the health workforce to ensure universal health care.