The United Nations Secretary-General established the High-Level Commission in March 2016, recognizing that investing in new jobs in the health and social workforce can generate economic growth and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission was tasked with finding innovative ways to address health labour shortages and ensure a good match between the skills of health workers and job requirements, so as to enhance the efficiency of the health sector and its contribution to inclusive growth.

CO-CHAIRS
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H.E. Mr Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa
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Ms Rosa Pavanelli, General-Secretary of Public Services International
Dr Judith Shamian, President of the International Council of Nurses
Prof. Joseph Stiglitz, Economist, Nobel Prize winner in Economic Sciences
Prof. Keizo Takemi, Member of the House of Councillors, Japan
Mr George K. Werner, Minister of Education, Liberia
Prof. Muhammad Yunus, Co-founder and Chairman of Yunus Social Business, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Commission Secretariat:
Investing in the health workforce

TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Partnerships and cooperation
- 2. Financing and fiscal space
- 3. International migration
- 4. Crisis and humanitarian settings
- 5. Data, information and accountability
- 6. Job creation
- 7. Gender equality and women’s rights
- 8. Health service delivery and organization
- 9. Educational, training and competencies
- 10. Technology

2017–2021

WORKING FOR HEALTH AND GROWTH
The health sector is a key economic sector and a major driver of decent job creation, inclusive economic growth, human security and sustainable development.

• Investing in health workforce is both a chance to improve human health as well as create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Countries that invest in health workers will have healthier people, and healthier people will mean healthier and more sustainable economies. Not only does this create jobs in health and social sectors, but also, the right jobs, in the right numbers and in the right places.

Addressing the health challenges of the 21st century related to demographic, epidemiological and technological changes, will require substantial transformation of the health workforce.

• Demographic changes, the shifting burden of disease, technological changes and the economic environment are redefining population health needs and what it means to have the right jobs, for the right number of health workers, with the right competencies.

• Health workers should address the social determinants of health, prioritize health promotion, disease prevention, primary care and people-centred, community-based interventions.

• There is increasing in scale up socially accountable education; developing policies to train and retain health workers; training students locally to serve their communities; using technology to reach people in remote areas will be some of the key innovations required.

• The world needs more health workers, equipped with new skills for new challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Stimulate investments in creating decent health sector jobs, particularly for women and youth, with the right skills, in the right numbers and in the right places.

Scale up transformation, high-quality education and lifelong learning for all health workers have skills that match the health needs of populations and countries to fit their potential.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Commission seeks to generate political commitment from governments and key partners to support the implementation of its recommendations, and invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take note and prioritize the implementation plan.

Unlocking the social and economic potential of health workforce will require strong political commitment, as well as effective coordination between countries and between sectors of the economy.

• Achieving a fit-for-purpose health workforce requires effective policy actions across finance, education, health, social welfare, labour and foreign affairs, through coordination mechanisms and policy dialogues. This also means committing more predictable international cooperation resources to address health workforce issues in the least developed countries.

• Intersectoral processes must engage the public and private sectors, civil society, international health workforce associations, regulatory bodies and education and training systems.

• A set of harmonized metrics is necessary to describe, monitor and track the trends in the broad labour market.

The high-level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth (the Commission) proposes actions to stimulate the creation of some 40 million new jobs in the health and social sector by 2030, paying specific attention to projected shortage of 10 million health workers by 2030 in low- and middle-income countries.

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Implementing the Commission’s ten recommendations requires a paradigm shift to reform the health workforce and workforce training, provide a strong political commitment, and mobilize investments in the health sector.

For more information: email comheeg@who.int

Working for Health and Growth Investing in the health workforce

Promote international collaboration, regional and international levels; engage civil society, international financial institutions, organizations and the private sector, and align international cooperative support, and investments in the health workforce, as part of national health and education strategies and plans.

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