Dublin Declaration unanimously adopted at the Fourth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health

Dublin, Friday November 17: Concrete actions to address a projected shortfall of 18 million health workers were announced today at the Fourth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, where representatives of over 70 countries also unanimously adopted the Dublin Declaration.

The Dublin Declaration is a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder declaration for improved governance, strategic investments and financing for a sustainable workforce. The commitments contained in the Declaration harness political leadership on human resources for health, at global, regional and national levels, to ensure countries move with greater speed to the goal of universal health coverage.

Addressing the Forum, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Simon Coveney TD highlighted the role of national governments in strengthening the global health workforce. “This Dublin Declaration is an expression of intent by the international community and its many constituencies as represented here at this fourth global Forum. It identifies nine key actions, which if implemented can improve the lives of our citizens.

“National governments have an important role in prioritising health system strengthening, including ensuring an adequately skilled and compensated health workforce.”

Measures listed in the Declaration are multiple and all of equal importance. The commitments include making investments towards transformative health workforce education and the creation of decent jobs in the health sector, especially for women and youth. The Dublin Forum saw the establishment of a Youth Forum, recognizing that attracting and retaining young health workers is critical to transforming the health and social workforce.

The Forum also committed to improving the safety and security of health workers by upholding International Humanitarian Law, strongly condemning violence, attacks and threats directed against medical personnel and facilities.

Another action of the Dublin Forum was the setting up of the Working for Health Multi-partner Trust Fund (MPTF), to support countries to expand and transform their health workforce. “The Working for Health MPTF will enable partners to pool funding to provide the support needed to generate change at country level,” says Jim Campbell, Director of the Health Workforce Department at the World Health Organization.

“It will be used to galvanise the efforts of pathfinder countries - those using innovative ways to build a fit for purpose health workforce - as well as priority countries, which are those struggling to provide access to health care and where the threat of emerging epidemics is greatest.”

The Forum also resulted in the first consultation on mechanisms for establishing an international platform on health worker mobility. This platform aims to achieve ‘win-wins’- maximizing benefits to both the country receiving workers as well as the country sending workers, while mitigating negative effects. This will be done through strengthened evidence, analysis, knowledge exchange and policy
action, including strengthening and implementation of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International recruitment of Health Personnel.

This was the fourth such Forum held to examine challenges, share experiences and lessons learned and identify the way forward for the global health workforce.

**Note to the Editor:**
The Working for Health programme is collaboration between the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to expand and transform of the global health and social service workforce in order to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage and ensure global health security. It was set up to carry forward recommendations made by the United Nations Secretary’s High level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, which found that investing in the health workforce drives economic growth.

Minister Coveney’s speech can be read in full at https://www.irishaid.ie/news-publications/speeches/speechesarchive/2017/november/minister-global-health-forum/

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