Statement on the relevance and effectiveness of the WHO Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

The relevance and effectiveness of the Code in the European and East and Southern African regions show mixed results.
In a number of European countries, the Code is effectively implemented, partly due to a dynamic civil society engagement. The financial crises, related austerity agenda and internal European policy context have given the Code a renewed relevance.
In the ESA region, the Code remains very relevant due to the high attrition rate of health workers migrating abroad. The Code is however far from effective being implemented, mainly because policymakers and civil society do not consider it to bring many benefits. It doesn’t have a high priority for the governments and society in the region.
The non-binding character and lack of compensation mechanism makes that the global Code has a somewhat similar faith as the bilateral and regional Codes of practices that were created over a decade ago.
Solutions to overcome this negative assessment would be to further clarify certain definitions within the Code; develop a governance structure and a sustainable, binding, financing system to redress health workforce losses due to migration. Likewise it is needed to address the governance of HRH migration more in the context of global international labor migration frameworks, the Sustainable Development agenda and the development of global and regional free trade agreements. A human rights based approach, universal access to health care and health equity should be the guiding values for such a global governance regime.

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