WHO programme on increasing access to health workers in remote and rural areas through improved retention

Jean-Marc Braichet
Coordinator
Health Workforce Migration and Retention Team
Department of Human Resources for Health
Cluster of Health Systems and Services
World Health Organization
Geneva
Migration and retention of health workers: two growing challenges

- The international migration of health workers are much more publicised than the migration of health workers within countries (public/private, rural/urban, etc.)

- These two types of migration call for responses that are complementary, but different
International and internal migration: complementary but differing responses required

● Responses to international migration of HRH
  - bilateral agreements (e.g. South Africa - UK; Philippines - Japan, etc.)
  - regional codes (e.g. Pacific code)
  - draft global code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel

● Responses to internal migration:
  - national measures
WHO is developing to major and complementary projects

- Developing a draft global code on the international recruitment of health personnel
- Implementing a programme which aims to improve the retention of health workers in rural and remote areas
Why are we developing this programme?

For at least three main reasons:

1. needs clearly identified
2. calls for action
3. renewal of PHC
1- Need has been clearly identified in all countries

Inequitable distribution of health workers

World population
- Rural: 50%
- Urban: 50%

Nurses worldwide
- Rural: 38%
- Urban: 62%

Physicians worldwide
- Rural: 24%
- Urban: 76%

United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects - The 2007 revision*
1- Need has been clearly identified in all countries

- Common problem for most of the countries, both developed and developing

- Inability to keep the workers that are being produce
  - Both in the country and within the country (external and internal migration)
  - Paradox of overproduction or unemployment in several countries
  - Efforts to scale up will come to naught if trained people cannot be attracted and maintained where needed
2 – Calls for action

- WHO resolutions on migration in 2004 and the rapid scaling up of health workers in 2006
- Kampala Declaration and Agenda for Global Action of the First Global Forum on HRH, March 2008
- G8 Summit, Toyako, Japan, July 2008
- E.B. January 2009
3 – The renewal of Primary Health Care

- WHR 2008 Primary Health Care, "Now More Than Ever"

- One of the main objectives of the PHC is to achieve « service delivery reforms »

- The ultimate goal of the HW retention programme is to improve health outcomes (including the health-related Millennium Development Goals) by increasing access to health services.
A programme built on three main strategic pillars

● 1- **Building the evidence base** on effective retention strategies
  - literature reviews, expert consultations, synthesis of the evidence, identification of knowledge gaps and commissioning research

● 2- **Supporting countries** to evaluate and adapt retention strategies
  - work with interested countries to evaluate past and on-going strategies and to develop and implement country-specific plans

● 3- **Developing and disseminating global recommendations** on increasing access to health workers in remote and rural areas through improved retention
  - a time-bound participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders following the steps set out by the WHO Guidelines Review Committee
Two Main Lines of Work for HRH Department

1. **Global and Normative Role**
   - Implementation of WHO Resolutions
   - Advocacy
   - Recommendations/Guidelines
   - Policy tools
   - Regulation
   - Publications

2. **Country Support**
Mutual reinforcement of knowledge transfer

- Developing retention policies
- Strengthening governance
- Improving educational system
- Defining strategic directions for health professions

Global & normative

Country support

Implementation

Country assessment

Evidence, findings

Impact at country level
A programme built on partnership

- With many WHO and non-WHO experts
- With many other institutions or international organisations, such as:

  Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, European Commission, Global Health Workforce Alliance, Professional Associations, World Bank, etc.
An ongoing calendar
Thank you for your attention!