

Statement of the Slovak Republic
156th Session of the Executive Board
Agenda Item 12. Health and Care Workforce
29 January 2025

Mr./Madam Chair, esteemed delegates,

The Slovak Republic thanks the World Health Organization for the comprehensive report on the implementation of the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030. We commend the Secretariat's efforts in supporting Member States to develop and strengthen their health and care workforces in alignment with this vital strategy.

Slovakia recognizes the global shortage of health workers as a pressing challenge that demands coordinated solutions at the national and international levels. In response to this, Slovakia has taken concrete steps to optimize the education, employment, and retention of health professionals while addressing systemic bottlenecks. However, we acknowledge the persistent challenges and the need for collective action to ensure sustainable progress.

National Efforts and Shared Successes

*Slovakia has prioritized initiatives aimed at strengthening its health workforce, focusing on education, employment, and retention. **Key policies and investments include:***

- **Introduction of Residency Programs:** *Slovakia has implemented residency programs for general practitioners and pediatricians to attract young doctors to primary care and underserved regions.*
- **Optimization of Hospital Networks:** *Through systematic planning, we have restructured hospital networks to align resources with population needs, improving both efficiency and access to care.*
- **Strengthening Primary Care:** *By enhancing the competencies of general practitioners and promoting collaborative models of care, Slovakia is working to address gaps in primary health services.*
- **Integration of eHealth:** *The implementation of electronic health systems has improved care coordination, efficiency, and the overall performance of the health sector.*

*These actions demonstrate that **targeted policies combining education reform, resource allocation, and technological integration can yield measurable benefits.** However, challenges such as shortages in nursing staff, an aging workforce, and uneven geographic distribution of health workers persist. To address these issues, Slovakia underscores the importance of investment in continuous education, new workforce models, and intersectoral collaboration.*

Response to Guiding Questions

1. Policies and Investments That Optimize the Workforce

Slovakia shares the following successful strategies that may benefit Member States facing similar challenges:

- **Competency-Based Education:** *The adoption of competency-based frameworks ensures that education aligns with the evolving needs of healthcare systems. For example, tailored training programs for general practitioners have increased workforce readiness for underserved areas.*
- **Retention in Underserved Areas:** *Financial incentives and residency programs have been instrumental in addressing workforce shortages in rural and remote areas.*
- **Collaboration Across Sectors:** *Interministerial cooperation in Slovakia has supported integrated workforce planning, aligning education and healthcare priorities.*

*Other Member States may benefit from implementing **workforce investment compacts**, integrating financial incentives for healthcare workers, and enhancing job satisfaction through career development opportunities.*

2. Support Needed from the Secretariat

Slovakia calls on WHO to provide the following types of support to advance Member States' capabilities in data, policy dialogue, and workforce investments:

- **Technical Assistance in Data Collection and Analysis:** *WHO's efforts to enhance the availability and quality of health workforce data are commendable. Slovakia urges continued support for developing national workforce registries to provide actionable insights into supply, demand, and gaps.*
- **Guidance on Innovative Education Models:** *Sharing best practices in competency-based education and digital health integration will enable Member States to align education systems with workforce demands.*
- **Facilitation of Knowledge Exchange:** *Regional platforms for sharing experiences and evidence-based solutions should be strengthened to address region-specific challenges in workforce development.*
- **Advancement of Intersectoral Policy Dialogues:** *WHO can support Member States in fostering collaboration between education, finance, and health sectors to ensure sustainable workforce planning and funding.*
- **Support for Gender Equity and Retention Policies:** *Policies addressing gender pay gaps and promoting decent working conditions will enhance workforce retention and productivity.*

Key Areas for Global Collaboration

Slovakia highlights the need for collective global action in the following areas:

- **Investment in Long-Term Workforce Planning:** *International frameworks should emphasize sustainable investment, ensuring resources are directed toward education, retention, and workforce development in underserved regions.*

- ***Innovative Financing Mechanisms:*** Slovakia encourages exploring multi-partner funding models that incentivize investments in health workforce education and capacity-building.
- ***Support for Digital Transformation:*** WHO should lead efforts in integrating AI and digital tools into workforce education and practice, addressing both capacity building and care delivery.

In conclusion, Slovak Republic reaffirms its commitment to collaborating with WHO and Member States in advancing the health and care workforce agenda. By leveraging shared experiences, scaling successful models, and addressing persistent challenges, we can collectively meet the goals of the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030. Slovakia stands ready to contribute its knowledge and expertise to this critical endeavor.

Thank you for your attention.