

Statement by Zimbabwe on Agenda item 12 WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

Zimbabwe aligns its statement to the one made by Ethiopia on behalf of the Member States of the WHO Africa region. We thank the Director General for the report and commend the WHO Expert Advisory Group for the successful completion of its work on the Relevance and Effectiveness of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

The EAG report notes the critical gaps in the Code's implementation and the urgent need for all stakeholders to address these gaps in order to leverage its full potential. We welcome the call by the Advisory Group for all WHO Member States to mobilize the necessary investments in the education, recruitment and retention of health workers to effectively deliver Universal Health Coverage.

At national level, Zimbabwe has been consistently reporting on its implementation of the Code, in addition to incorporating the provisions of the Code in the bilateral agreements which have been concluded related to international health worker mobility.

We are however deeply concerned over the escalating international health worker migration which threatens achievement of UHC and countries ability to meet their staffing requirements. We recall that the Code calls for the provision of effective and appropriate technical assistance and support for health personnel retention, training in source countries, including access to specialized training, technology and skills transfers and the support of return migration.

In light of the foregoing, we welcome the Advisory Group's recommendation calling for leading destination countries and development partners, to provide health workforce related support and safeguards and to commit multi-year flexible funds towards the Code and its implementation, as a global public good. We also urge destination countries to collaborate with source countries to strengthen capacities particularly in the most affected and highly at-risk countries.

2020 had been designated as the Year for Nurses and Midwives in honour of their service and important role within the healthcare system. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has demonstrated our reliance on all health and frontline workforce and we wish to applaud them for their work.

In conclusion, Zimbabwe supports adoption of the decision directing the Secretariat to continue to provide guidance on measures needed to ensure and strengthen the Code's relevance and effectiveness. We also support the designation of 2021 as the year of Health and Care workers.