The Commonwealth of The Bahamas

74th WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (2021)
AGENDA ITEM 15: Health Workforce
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS Document A74/12 and A74/13

Madame Chair

The Bahamas notes the independent review of the WHO's Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel and applauds its relevance since its 2010 adoption. However, questions on its effectiveness remain –given limitations in its publicity and incorporation into national laws and regulatory frameworks for ethical recruitment. COVID-19 has brought additional barriers to measuring The Code's effectiveness.

Madame Chair

Nurses, physicians and other health workers continue on the COVID-19 frontline, exacting a harsh toll Worldwide. COVID-19 infections, death toll and the impact on the physical and mental health of healthcare workers are staggering. During the early phases of the pandemic, 1,413 deaths among health and care workers[1] were reported worldwide. During the 2nd and 3rd waves of COVID-19, the number stood at over 115,000[2]. The Bahamas salutes those who paid the ultimate price.

Madame Chair

These losses exacerbates supply shortages and gaps pre-dating COVID-19. Essential health services and programmes have stalled or paused to re-direct limited health workers for COVID-19 patient care, to engage in contact tracers and other mitigation measures. COVID-19 teaches that surge capacity is more than a theoretical construct or a future desired state but rather a non-negotiable necessity. The Bahamas looks forward to tools to better assist Member States in informing efforts to build surge capacity.

Madame Chair

[1] https://gh.bmj.com/content/5/12/e003097
[2] Opening Remarks DG Dr. Tedros 74th WHA

"Working for Health" sunsets in 2021. The Bahamas requests the Secretariat to report to the 75th Assembly on achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. The Bahamas is pleased to learn of progress on the WHO Academy. From now to 2023, The Bahamas requests the WHO to engage and optimize digital platforms for building leadership capacity modules not just for nurses, but across the health system.

The Bahamas supports the draft resolution.

Thank you.