



Communiqué

Meeting of the High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth Lyon, France - 23 March 2016

We, the Chairs, President of South Africa, H.E. Mr Jacob Zuma and President of France, H.E. Mr François Hollande, the co-chairs – Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, Mr Ángel Gurría, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Mr Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization – together with the members of the High-Level Commission have been asked by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General to find innovative ways to address health labour shortages and ensure a good match between the skills of health workers and job requirements, so as to foster efficiency of the health sector and its contribution to inclusive growth. These shortages threaten both public health and the economy, as was so starkly demonstrated by the 2014–15 Ebola outbreak in western Africa and as is being seen today across much of southern America during the ongoing Zika virus epidemic.

We are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, which intend to end poverty in all its forms everywhere, and to put in place the building blocks of sustained prosperity. The world needs a fit-for-purpose health and social workforce to advance universal health coverage and to ensure that every person enjoys the right to health.

We also recognize that full and productive employment and decent work conditions contribute to our overall goal of eliminating poverty and addressing inequality. Health and social workers are primarily women, and productive and rewarding jobs in this sector will contribute to empowering women and to achieving inclusive, sustainable growth.

In that spirit, the Commission's main objective is to propose actions to Member States, the UN Secretary-General, relevant multilateral organizations and other stakeholders for the health sector to contribute to global inclusive economic growth, the creation of decent jobs, and to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages.

Collective action will help steer the economic demand, estimated by the World Bank, for around 40 million new jobs in the health sector by 2030. It can also address the shortage projected by the World Health Organization of 18 million health workers by 2030, primarily in developing countries.

During our first meeting, we agreed on the need for a transformative people-centred health agenda, which is realized through effective and equitable partnership of all stakeholders. Where appropriate,

we will explore ways to enhance investment in health and overall human capital at domestic, regional and international levels, including through the assistance of innovative financing instruments and multilateral development banks, also taking into account the role of the private sector.

We expect that this Commission will make recommendations on education and training models, as well as on the range of skills required, especially in the poorest countries and in disadvantaged geographical areas, to ensure that health workers' competencies are in line with the needs of populations, taking into account epidemiologic and demographic changes, and in particular ageing and non-communicable diseases. We will also consider the imperative of building resilient and performing health systems and the value of prioritizing health promotion and prevention, thus alleviating financial and human constraints. Embracing innovation will enable this shift towards new health delivery models.

We further committed to examine the potential beneficial and adverse effects of international mobility of health workers and, as appropriate, to explore innovative approaches to maximize benefits for all countries and the health workers themselves.

We believe that this Commission proposes a major political and paradigm shift to promote investment in the health sector in order to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productive employment and decent work, in addition to ensuring healthy lives and well-being.

We are grateful to those who provide insights and inputs through meetings, consultations and other submissions. Following this meeting in Lyon, we will begin to draft our report and strive to ensure that our recommendations, to be submitted to the Secretary-General in September 2016, will provide a new, tangible and coherent set of guiding actions for all governments and relevant stakeholders. We aim, thereby, to uphold the spirit of partnership and mutual responsibility reflecting the global nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. We are committed to move forward on this critical issue and to create a momentum to attain concrete results.

We extend our thanks to our hosts, the Government of the Republic of France and the people of Lyon for their warmth and hospitality.