

# TEN RECOMMENDATIONS

Job creation

Gender equality and women's rights

Education, training and competencies

Health service delivery and organization

High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth

Technology

2017-2021

Financing and fiscal space

Partnerships and cooperation

International migration

Crisis and humanitarian settings

Data, information and accountability

The United Nations Secretary-General established the High-Level Commission in March 2016, recognizing that investing in new jobs in the health and social workforce can generate economic growth and contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission was tasked with finding innovative ways to address health labour shortages and ensure a good match between the skills of health workers and job requirements, so as to enhance the efficiency of the health sector and its contribution to inclusive growth.

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# WORKING FOR HEALTH AND GROWTH

*Investing in the health workforce*

High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth



The health sector is a **key economic sector** and a major driver of decent job creation, inclusive economic growth, human security and sustainable development.

- Investing in health workforce is both a chance to improve human health as well as create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Countries that invest in health workers will have healthier people, and healthier people will mean healthier and more sustainable economies. Not only do countries that underinvest in health workers endanger the health of their people, they are more vulnerable to crises as demonstrated during the Ebola epidemic.
- Over the past 10 years, the health sector created more jobs than any other sector. This trend will continue in the coming years. Moreover, these jobs induce better productivity for the working population, by improving their health.
- With the right investments and actions, the world has a unique opportunity to meet the growing global demand for health workers, make progress towards universal health coverage (UHC), ensure human security, and generate large economic and social returns.

The High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth (“the Commission”) proposes actions to stimulate the creation of some 40 million new jobs in the health and social sector by 2030, paying specific attention to projected shortage of 18 million health workers by 2030 in low- and lower middle-income countries.

# THE WAY FORWARD

The Commission seeks to generate political commitment from governments and key partners to support the implementation of its recommendations, and invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to take note and prioritize the implementation plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Stimulate investments in creating decent health sector jobs, particularly for women and youth, with the right skills, in the right numbers and in the right places.



Maximize women’s economic participation and foster their empowerment through institutionalizing their leadership, addressing gender biases and inequities in education and the health labour market, and tackling gender concerns in health reform processes.



Raise adequate funding from domestic and international sources, public and private where appropriate, and consider broad-based health financing reform where needed, to invest in the right skills, decent working conditions and an appropriate number of health workers.

Addressing the health challenges of the 21st century related to demographic, epidemiological and technological changes, will require **substantial transformation of the health workforce**.

- Demographic changes, the shifting burden of diseases, technological changes and the economic environment are redefining population health needs and what it means to have the right jobs, for the right number of health workers, with the right competencies.
- Health workers should address the social determinants of health, prioritise health promotion, disease prevention, primary care and people-centred, community-based interventions.
- These require investing in scaling up socially accountable education; developing policies to train and re-train health workers; training students locally to serve their own communities; using technology to reach people in remote areas will be some of the key innovations required.

The world needs more health workers, equipped with new skills for new challenges.

Implementing the Commission’s ten recommendations requires a paradigm shift to revise the status quo and alter the current trajectory. There is no time to lose.

Successful implementation of the Commission’s recommendations will require strong intersectoral engagement and actions of stakeholders—including civil society and health worker’s organizations—at national, regional and global levels.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Scale up transformative, high-quality education and lifelong learning so that all health workers have skills that match the health needs of populations and can work to their full potential.



Reform service models concentrated on hospital care and focus instead on prevention and on the efficient provision of high-quality, affordable, integrated, community-based, people-centred primary and ambulatory care, paying special attention to underserved areas.



Harness the power of cost-effective information and communication technologies to enhance health education, people-centred health services and health information systems.



Ensure investment in the International Health Regulations core capacities, including skills development of national and international health workers in humanitarian settings and public health emergencies, both acute and protracted. Ensure the protection and security of all health workers and health facilities in all settings.

Unlocking the social and economic potential of health employment will require **strong political commitment**, as well as effective cooperation between countries and between sectors of the economy.

- Achieving a fit-for-purpose health workforce requires effective policy actions across finance, education, health, social welfare, labour and foreign affairs, through coordination mechanisms and policy dialogues. This also means committing more predictable international cooperation resources to address health workforce issues in the least developed countries.
- Intersectoral processes must engage the public and private sectors, civil society, trade unions, health worker associations, regulatory bodies and education and training institutions.
- A set of harmonized metrics is necessary to describe, monitor and track trends in the broad health labour market.

In line with the global nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, partnerships in countries and within the international community will be critical to implement the recommended actions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Promote intersectoral collaboration at national, regional and international levels; engage civil society, unions and other health workers’ organizations and the private sector; and align international cooperation to support investments in the health workforce, as part of national health and education strategies and plans.



Advance international recognition of health workers’ qualifications to optimize skills use, increase the benefits from and reduce the negative effects of health worker migration, and safeguard migrants’ rights.



Undertake robust research and analysis of health labour markets, using harmonized metrics and methodologies, to strengthen evidence, accountability and action.



Download the Commission’s report **Working for Health and Growth Investing in the health workforce**

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