



## Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative Platform on Adequate and Sustained Health Workforce Financing

The critical shortage of health workers in low-income countries, especially in Africa and Asia, is widely known. **However, there are no meaningful plans for financing a proportionate response that will allow delivery of Millennium Development and other health goals.** The Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative, a civil society-led network of the Global Health Workforce Alliance, is campaigning to ensure adequate and sustained financing for human resources for health.

### **National Commitments to Health Financing Must Be Fulfilled:**

Low and middle income countries have a responsibility to prioritize health system strengthening [HSS] and the human resources needed to provide health services to all their residents. In Africa, that includes the 2001 commitment made by African Heads of State at Abuja to spend at least 15% of the national budgets on health. Outside Africa, too, governments must increase their health spending to meet their human rights obligation to spend the maximum of available resources towards fulfilling the right to health. In addition, regional and local governments should allocate a sufficient portion of their budgets to health, and improve the efficiency of their health systems and equitably distribute health services to rural and underserved areas.

### **Donors Must Fill the Massive Remaining Gaps:**

Even when governments maximize their domestic commitments, there are tens of billions of dollars missing, creating a financing gap that must be filled by the donor community. Donors, and especially governments that are part of GHWA, need to fulfill the commitments already made and make significant new commitments to increase financing from human resources for health.

Funding is needed for education, recruitment and retention of health workers – all of which are expensive and require a large and sustained budgetary commitment. **Donor funding has to be predictable, long term and sustained, so as to enable government planning and implementation.** Donor countries need to commit individually to paying their fair share of resources towards alleviating the human resources for health crisis, in developing countries as well as their own.

### **The IMF's overly restrictive macroeconomic policies must be reformed:**

At the same time that governments are increasing human resources for health, Ministries of Finance and the IMF are adopting macroeconomic policies that limit overall public expenditure, and consequently health spending and wage bills. There cannot be sufficient progress on strengthening health systems and human resources for health unless countries are able to spend significantly more on HRH/HSS, whether from donor or domestic sources.

The Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative is committed to the following:

- To hold all governments accountable to their obligation to spend the maximum available resources on health, including African governments to their commitment to spend 15% or more of their budgets on health;
- To increase funding for health systems strengthening and human resources for health available through disease-specific funding programs, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and PEPFAR, and to encourage greater commitments to pre-service education, recurring human resources costs, and robust retention strategies;
- To advocate for the International Health Partnership and other bilateral HSS and HRH programs to dramatically increase and sustain predictable and adequate funding;
- To advocate for adequate financing for quality education necessary to train the health workers needed;
- To advocate for significant changes in overly restrictive macroeconomic policies espoused by the IMF, and all too readily followed by Ministries of Finance, that will enable increased funding to be spent on health services, and not merely shuffled from place to place.

*The Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative (HWAI) is the civil-society led partner of the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA). HWAI's purpose is to advocate for the policies and sustained investments necessary to develop and empower a health workforce capable of delivering on health goals. For more information or to join the initiative, contact Eric Friedman (efriedman@phrusa.org)*