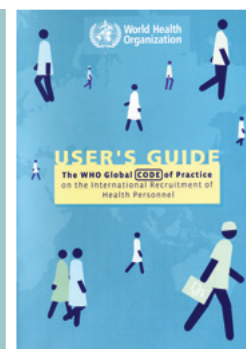


# The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel<sup>1</sup>



## International Centre on Nurse Migration



### 1. Objectives

The Code aims to establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical recruitment of health personnel and to serve as a reference for all Member States.

### 2. Scope

The Code is global in scope and sets out to guide governments of all Member States and interested stakeholders in matters relating to the international recruitment of health personnel.

### 3. Ethical international recruitment

The Code discourages the active recruitment of health personnel from developing countries facing critical shortages of health personnel.

### 4. Fair treatment of migrant health personnel

The Code emphasizes the importance of equal treatment for migrant health workers and the domestically trained health workforce. All health personnel should have the opportunity to assess the benefits and risks associated with different employment positions.

### 5. Health personnel development and health systems sustainability

Countries should implement effective health workforce planning, education, training and retention strategies to sustain a health workforce that is appropriate for the specific conditions of each country, and to reduce the need to recruit migrant health personnel.

### 6. International cooperation

The Code encourages collaboration between destination and source countries so that both can derive benefits from the international migration of health personnel.

### 7. Support for developing countries

Member States are encouraged to provide technical assistance and financial support to developing countries, or countries with economies in transition that are experiencing a critical health workforce shortage.

### 8. Data gathering

Member States are encouraged to strengthen or establish health personnel information systems, including information on health personnel migration, in order to collect and analyse and translate data into effective workforce policies and plans.

### Guiding principles regarding the Who Code

The Code is based on:

- ▶ The right of all people to the highest attainable standard of health.
- ▶ The right for any individual, including health personnel, to leave any country and to migrate to any other country that wishes to admit and employ them.
- ▶ The Code adopts a comprehensive approach addressing some of the underlying causes of migration, as well as issues relating to health system sustainability.
- ▶ The Code considers specific needs and special circumstances of countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, which are particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in health workforce numbers.
- ▶ The Code makes some distinct provisions for health personnel recruitment in these vulnerable countries.

<sup>1</sup> The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel shall hereafter be referred to as either the "WHO Code" or "The Code". *User's Guide: The WHO Global CODE of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*, 2011, World Health Organization.

## The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel<sup>1</sup>



### 9. Information exchange

Member States should periodically collect and report to the WHO Secretariat data on laws and regulations related to health personnel, retirement and migration, as well as data from health personnel information systems. Member States are encouraged to promote information exchange in international health personnel migration and health systems, both nationally and internationally.

### 10. The Code's implementation

For purposes of international communication, each Member State should, as appropriate, designate a national authority responsible for the exchange of information regarding health personnel migration and the implementation of the Code.

#### Policy background

The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel was adopted by the 63rd World Health Assembly on 21 May 2010.

This was the second time in the organization's history that WHO Member States have used the Constitutional Authority of the organization to develop a Code: The only other Code to be agreed upon was the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes in 1981.

The Code aims to establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical international recruitment of health personnel, and to facilitate the strengthening of health systems. It was designed by Member States to serve as a continuous and dynamic framework for global dialogue and cooperation.

The Code represents a global response to a global problem. The Code is unique in scope, providing the only global framework for international cooperation to address the global issues of health personnel migration.

### 11. Monitoring of the Code's implementation

Member States are encouraged to implement the Code in collaboration with all stakeholders. All parties should strive to work individually and collectively to achieve the objectives of the Code.

### 12. Monitoring the implementation process

With regard to implementing the Code, Member States should periodically report measures taken, results achieved, difficulties encountered and lessons learned to the WHO Secretariat. The WHO Director General will, subsequently, report to the World Health Assembly on the effectiveness of the Code in achieving its objectives, and make suggestions for improvement.

CGFNS International ([www.cgfns.org](http://www.cgfns.org)), the International Council of Nurses ([www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch)), the International Centre for Human Resources in Nursing ([www.ichrn.org](http://www.ichrn.org)) and the International Centre on Nurse Migration ([www.intlnursemigration.org](http://www.intlnursemigration.org)), as non-governmental organisations, are pleased to support implementation of and provide information on the WHO Code (Article 9.3(c)).

This fact sheet was adapted from, "User's Guide to the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel", World Health Organization, 2011. For further information concerning the Code and other complementary documents, please visit <http://www.who.int/hrh/migration/code/practice/en/index.html>

