



## ***The Global Health Workforce Crisis*** **How the United States Should Respond**

*“The proposed legislation, [the U.S. African Health Capacity Investment Act], is a comprehensive bill which identifies real solutions to a very real problem, and rings true in the African context. . . . Its overall message is one of partnership – that we must all work together now to address health human resources and systems strengthening in Africa.”*

*Dr. Lola Dare, African Council for Sustainable Health Development, Nigeria*

The United States can take concrete steps to mitigate the global health workforce crisis. Such action will save millions of lives in under-resourced areas around the world. The US can do this by integrating health workforce and other health capacity-building into foreign assistance programs and take other steps as outlined below.

### *Financial and Technical Support*

- The United States should provide significant financial and technical support to enable developing countries, and in particular countries in sub-Saharan Africa, to:
  - Develop and implement comprehensive, costed health workforce plans that are integrated into overall national health plans and that are designed to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which focus on maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, and universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment, prevention, care, and support.
  - Train more health workers while improving health worker retention by investing in safe working conditions, adequate compensation, continuous learning opportunities, effective supervision, sound governance and management, basic health infrastructure, and sufficient levels of medicines, supplies, and equipment.
  - Dramatically increase the number of health workers in underserved areas.
  - Significantly expand the number of community-level health workers.
- The United States should increase its funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, (including \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2008), support a strong role for the Global Fund in health system strengthening, and provide technical support to countries to include health system-wide elements in Global Fund proposals.
- PEPFAR reauthorization should include health workforce planning requirements while providing significant funds to countries for the development of the health workforces and systems required to achieve universal access to HIV services by 2010 while making rapid progress towards achieving the health-related MDGs.

- The new foreign assistance framework should be revised to more fully incorporate health system needs, while new policies are instituted that prioritize health system investments.
- The Millennium Challenge Corporation should provide clear guidance to applicants on the availability of funds to build health capacity, including the health workforce, and support countries applying for funds to build their health capacity.

### *Sound Macroeconomic Policies*

- The US Treasury Department should support policies at the IMF and World Bank that will enable countries to make the investments necessary to achieve the MDGs, and reject country agreements that are not designed to achieve these goals.

### *Comprehensive Response to Health Worker Migration*

- The United States should adopt and implement a comprehensive response to health workforce migration, including:
  - Develop and implement a national health workforce strategy that reduces reliance on foreign health professionals and works towards health workforce self-sufficiency, including by investing in increased training capacity.
  - Develop a code of ethical practice on the recruitment of foreign health professionals.

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