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## Frontline Health Workers Coalition Response to GHWA's Synthesis Paper for the Global Strategy January 2015

The [Frontline Health Workers Coalition](#) (FHWC) reiterates its support for a bold and financed Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health (HRH) for 2016-2030 and thanks the Board of the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA's) for the opportunity to comment on the Synthesis Document that will be the basis of GHWA's recommendations to the World Health Organization for development of this strategy.

The substantive work of the hundreds of experts around the world to develop the consultation documents, and the draft synthesis paper produced by the GHWA Secretariat provides an excellent overview of the inextricable link between access to a high-quality global health workforce and achievement of all the health targets being considered by member states under the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper also highlights the major issues that need to be addressed to ensure a sustainable, resilient and fit-for-purpose global health workforce in the coming decades. We thank the GHWA Secretariat and all those involved in the consultations, including staff of several members of the Frontline Health Workers Coalition, for their efforts.

The FHWC believes that the Global HRH Strategy should be the driving force behind coordinated financing, policy making, implementation plans to strengthen health workforce around the world, especially for populations with the least access to trained and supported health workers. As we have just seen this week at the Gavi Alliance replenishment conference – the global community can be galvanized around a clear vision and cost estimates to achieve that vision.

The FHWC offers the following comments and recommendations to inform the presentation of the synthesis paper to the GHWA Board, and more broadly to the World Health Organization (WHO) as it produces a zero draft of the Global HRH Strategy:

- 1. Member states must define the overarching 2030 vision and goals for health workforce, the most critical objectives to achieve the vision and an action plan/framework to achieve those objectives.**

The synthesis paper discusses at length the need for greater political attention and leadership to increase investment in and commitment to HRH. A clear and cohesive vision with targets is crucial to marshal support for the strategy and for the accountability framework identified in the synthesis paper in Section 7.



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FHWC strongly supports the concept of an accountability framework and sample targets as described in the paper. We also recognize that consensus on the objectives will be difficult to achieve. However, we recommend that a paramount objective focus on **ensuring access to trained and supported health workers**. In addition, we propose the vision of the strategy would be to ensure that by 2030:

- All communities will have access trained and supported health workers with a minimum core set of competencies;
- All countries will have the health workforce and systems needed to stop existing and emerging public health threats.

The FHWC recommends that the overarching vision of the strategy is included as a sub-goal in the post-2015 SDGs and that related SDG goals in turn inform the vision and goals of the strategy, as is recommended by the synthesis paper.

2. **Member states must define the body/mechanism for coordinated national and regional plans to achieve the vision and goals of the strategy.**

FHWC strongly agrees with section 5.3 of the synthesis paper that “measures should be put in place to ensure that a global platform to advance the health workforce agenda is empowered and supported to facilitate coordination and accountability at the international level,” as well as section 7.3 on accountability and reporting. The synthesis paper recommends that WHO should facilitate the reporting process – but member states must clearly define the body/mechanism for coordination efforts on this strategy as well as roles and responsibilities for member states and multilateral bodies.

3. **The costs of successful implementation the Global HRH strategy must be estimated prior to its enactment, including estimates of development assistance required to successfully implement the strategy and coordination costs.**

FHWC strongly agrees with the recommendation in 4.2 of the synthesis paper that develop a “single set of costed estimates of health workforce requirements for the successful implementation” of the strategy. Estimates of development assistance financing that would be required and costs of coordination are especially needed in order for donor governments and advocates to make pledges to fulfill those requirements.

4. **Member states must define the mechanism(s) that will be utilized to ensure coordinated and sufficient donor financing and the means to which that financing will be pledged to achieve the HRH needs identified through the national plans guiding the strategy.**

FHWC strongly agrees with the recommendation in 3.11 of the strategy for extended financing cycles for health workforce strengthening implementation. To accomplish this recommendation, the strategy must have a financing plan define how donor investments will be pledged and coordinated to meet costing estimates.

5. **The Global HRH Strategy must include an implementation plan.**

In order to achieve the Call To Action envisioned in Section 6 of the synthesis paper, the strategy must be paired with an implementation plan with agreed upon timelines to guide programmatic, political and financial commitments. The implementation plan for the strategy should include clear delineation of responsibilities for country governments, regional and global institutions, health worker associations, non-governmental organizations, education and training institutions, civil society, the private sector, and other crucial bodies. This delineation will help create accountability and support the sustainability of efforts to recruit, train, deploy, support and retain health workers, especially those on the frontlines of care. It is critical that the implementation plan include the costing estimates and financing plan mentioned above.

6. **Improvement of data collection and harmonization is critical for success of the strategy.**

FHWC echoes the call in the synthesis paper for need for better evidence and data related to HRH, especially in fragile states and countries with the most perilous health workforce shortages and inequities. We support the harmonization of data collection both to inform decision makers in the development and implementation of country-level HRH strategies, but also to develop core indicators and ensure greater accountability.

- o The synthesis paper notes that a critical barrier to the availability and use of HRH data is the lack of consensus on definitions and norms and standards for cadres of workers. We encourage as part of this effort adoption of the recommendations from the 2014 FHWC report [A Commitment to Community Health Workers: Improving Data for Decision Making](#). The strategy should be an effective vehicle to establish clear definitions to encourage integration of and measure the impact of these and other cadres of health workers.



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7. **The Call to Action (Section 6) is a critical component of the synthesis paper and a Similar Call To Action should be included in the strategy.**
8. **WHO must provide a consultation period for civil society comment on the zero draft of the strategy.** Civil society consultation on the zero draft of the strategy is a critical step of ensuring both buy in and a robust strategy. We call on the GHWA board to recommend a consultation period before the member state negotiation process and final ratification, similar to the WHO-led process for creation of the [Every Newborn Action Plan](#).

#### **About the Frontline Health Workers Coalition**

The FHWC is an alliance of 40 US-based public and private organizations working together to urge greater and more strategic U.S. investment in frontline health workers in developing countries as a cost-effective way to save lives and foster a healthier, safer and more prosperous world.

More information about the Coalition is available at [frontlinehealthworkers.org](http://frontlinehealthworkers.org).