

Commonwealth Secretariat: International Migration of Health Workers

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COMMONWEALTH
SECRETARIAT

Commonwealth Secretariat: International Migration of Health Workers

- The Commonwealth
- Health worker migration in the Commonwealth
- Supporting health worker retention policies
- The Commonwealth Code
- Exploring new approaches to managed migration



Commonwealth

- An association of 53 Independent States
- Commonwealth Secretariat established as main intergovernmental agency in 1965
- Works for development, democracy and Peace
- 1.8 billion citizens
- 30% of the world's population



Health worker migration in the Commonwealth

- Shared language;
- close affinity between education programmes, role definitions, and professional regulation requirements
- Strong tradition of “flows” within Commonwealth countries (e.g India-UK; Caribbean- Canada; Africa- UK; UK- New Zealand; New Zealand- Australia)



Supporting health worker retention policies

- Recognition that international out-migration is just one of many “flows” of health workers
- Focus on implementation of relevant and effective retention policies at country level
- Regional workshops bringing together relevant stakeholders- Ministries, professional associations; in West Africa; South/East Asia; island states; East, Central and Southern Africa (planned);
- Outputs: Country action plans; Retention strategies



The Commonwealth Code

- Purpose:
 - guidelines that take account of impact
 - intended to discourage targeted recruitment from countries that are experiencing shortages
 - safeguard rights of recruits



The Commonwealth Code

- Addresses the need to strengthen health systems in developing countries faced with shortage,
- emphasizes the value of return migration
- seeks to facilitate the process by both source and destination countries.



The Commonwealth Code

- Guiding principles:

transparency

fairness

mutuality of benefits

- www.thecommonwealth.org/health



The Commonwealth Code

- Companion document:
 - bilateral agreements
 - role of recruitment agencies
 - recruitment and selection
 - registration
 - workforce planning
 - work environment (pay, equal opportunities etc)



Exploring new approaches to managed migration

- ComSec working with other partners (i.e COMESA; CARICOM) to examine potential for managed migration of nurses:
 - Canada = Caribbean
 - East Africa = EU countries



Summary

- Emphasis on broader issues of retention and planning of health workforce
- Working to support partnership and models of “managed” migration
- Support to Code of Practice (similar approach for teachers)
- Issue to be examined at Commonwealth Health Ministers meeting, May 2006

