

Update Briefing Note: Human Resources for Health (HRH) Working Group

Background:

- The health sector in Tanzania is facing serious Human Resources for Health (HRH) crises. Serious HRH shortfalls and challenges have been identified and highlighted at the Annual Joint Reviews of the health sector since 2002 up to 2006.
- The situation was also declared a national emergency at the recently concluded National health summit held in Arusha in September 2006.
- In response the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) in 2004 responded by establishing a working group. The working group is expected to support government to coordinate HRH issues and provide advice to the MOHSW.
- The members were formally appointed by the MOH in 2004 by the MOH, and charged with addressing the Human Resource issue.

Terms of Reference (TOR):

The HRH working group is designed to provide advisory support and facilitate better coordination of HRH activities on behalf of the MOHSW.

Inputs from the HRH working group are expected to be channeled through the office of the Director HRH Development to the office of the Permanent Secretary of the MOHSW. The Director HRH Development functions as the overall secretariat of the HRH working team.

Specifically, the HRH Working Group undertakes:

1. Review HRH priorities for immediate, medium, and long-term.
2. Monitor progress with implementation with a view to advice respective authorities timely for appropriate remedial measures;
3. Receive and comment on HRH updates from members/sectors with respect to ongoing or proposed projects and programs and related interventions.
4. Take stock of human resource roles from sector ministries, problems, and issues, and provide practical advice for improvement.
5. Advocate on behalf of HRH issues with appropriate government offices and line ministries and partners.

Membership: Presently consist of the following representatives:

- Ministry of Health
- Representatives from selected lines Ministries:
 1. Director President's office Regional Administration & Local Government (PORALG)
 2. Director Ministry of Finance
 3. Head Health sector reform programme
 4. Gender Focal person (MOHSW)
- **Representative from partner organization:**
 1. GTZ, Irish AID, JICA, USAID, World Bank and WHO
- The meetings are agenda/themes are largely influenced by current identified priorities as agreed by members.
- Meetings are summoned by request through the MOHSW authorities.

- Current venue for meetings is at the MOHSW conference room.

Current Activities and Updates:

Issues of priority been attended to by the HRH working group include:

1. ***Development of the HRH strategic plan:***

Action: Draft strategic plan document has been distributed for comments by stakeholders. WHO is working with the MOHSW to collate and feedback comments to members. The MOHSW is currently looking at the possibility of completing the strategic plan document by March April 2007 to align with government funding cycle.

2. **Emergency Hiring Plan For Health Workers:** This plan was a conceived early in 2006 with support from USAID. It is aimed at facilitating rapid process to address HRH gaps especially targeted at improving the access and coverage for HIV and AIDS service. **Funding** is expected to be provided from outstanding unspent funds accruing to the country from the 4th Round of the GFATM allocation. Implementation of the plan is expected soon after the MOHSW have sorted out knotty gray issues including long term contractual obligations and government funding after the GFATM funds are exhausted.

Comment: Need for details including responsibility for recruitment and retention of health workers under the plan. Initial proposal which was rejected by the MOHSW was for external recruitment on behalf of the MOHSW.

3. **Mapping of HRH Initiative among stakeholders:**

A mapping exercise of ongoing HRH initiatives by stakeholders is proposed with a view to enhance overall coordination and available information on HRH in the country. WHO is coordinating this process .

Action: As part of this process a detailed HRH profile is planned (details are currently been worked out with colleagues from WHO/HQ and WHO/AFRO). Outputs from this exercise are also expected to benefit the development of HRH observatory in the country.

4. **Presentation of Labour Market Analysis study:** The study was undertaken with funding from USAID by the Capacity Project.

Important issues/Observations:

There is overall need to speed up current pace of addressing HRH issues plus:

- a. Avail resources to strengthen the Human Resource development Directorate (increase present complement of available skilled staff , logistic, equipment and operational support)
- b. Identification of HRH quick wins activities to be implemented
- c. Address limited involvement of the private sector