

The Fifth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health



Francis Omaswa describes the objectives and outcomes of the Fifth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health Group Satellite at the CUGH 2023 Conference.

The Fifth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health took place 3 to 5 April 2023, at WHO, Geneva. It coincided with the World Health Worker Week. The theme of the forum were *protecting, safeguarding, and investing in the health and care workforce*.

The Forum took place nearly four years after the previous Forum in Dublin and over five years since the adoption of the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030. The Forum provided updates on progress in its implementation and shared evidence and experiences on workforce development, as well as opportunities for a post COVID-19 era that will inform the implementation of the Working for Health 2022-2030 Action Plan. Forum participants examined the required policy solutions, investments, and multi-sectoral partnerships to address health and care workforce challenges and advance health systems towards universal health coverage and health security. The outcomes of the Forum will inform the United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on UHC in September 2023.

The Forum was intersectoral and engaged participation from over four thousand participants both physical and virtual. These included Ministers of Health, Non-State Actors and Civil Society, Financing institutions and other UN agencies.

The Forum objectives were to share progress on the implementation of the Global Strategy on HRH: workforce 2030, and the SDG agenda, to examine the required policy options, opportunities and investments to address global health and care workforce challenges and build capacities and capabilities to advance health systems towards UHC and global health security.

Key issues that were addressed included the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on HRH on integrated health service delivery and the essential public health functions in countries. Overcoming market failures between education and employment of health and care workers and how governments can work across sectors to address Health Workforce (HWF) challenges at country regional and global levels.

Francis Omaswa. Founding CEO, African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (Kampala, Uganda). Founding Executive Director of the Global Health Workforce Alliance, WHO and publisher Africa Health Journal



Prof. Omaswa with the Director General, WHO at the Fifth Global HRH Conference

The following challenges noted at the Forum were complex but not insurmountable:

- i. The Challenges we face manifest at the local level, but they have global and multisectoral causes that can only be addressed with a global and multisectoral response.
- ii. Migration is not a standalone issue: it results from labour market conditions and requires labour market solutions, and market failures should be addressed head on.
- iii. Likewise, education and training for health and care workers cannot be addressed in isolation from wider education and training strategies.
- iv. Improving gender equity, addressing gender-based violence and engaging youth are not issues for the health sector alone, and can only be properly addressed as part of a whole-of-society response.

Expected Forum outcomes were to:

- Drive national multi-sectoral political engagement to address workforce challenges for UHC and the essential public health functions, including Emergency preparedness and response
- Develop consensus on priority workforce solutions to inform preparations for United Nations High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (September 2023)
- Inform and influence domestic and international investments in education and jobs
- Launch of the Multi-sectoral advisory group of experts (MSAGE)