

Regional Workshop on Human Resources for Health: Strengthening Competence and Compassion, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 3-5 July 2025

Co-organized by The Asian Collective for Health System and WHO SEARO

Draft Agenda

General objectives

Strengthening human resources for health to address evolving population health needs, through shared learning and cooperation.

Specific objectives

1. To facilitate cross-country learning approaches to strengthen human resources for health, with focus on improving capacity and quality with compassion (clinical and people centeredness).
2. To discuss implications related to the international migration of health workers and facilitate a consultation on the Interim Report of the EAG's Review of the WHO Global Code of Practice's Relevance and Effectiveness.
3. To deliberate and consider launch of a South-East Asia Regional Network of Health Professional Regulators
4. To strengthen complementarity in partner activities related to HRH, aligned with national government vision and priorities.

AGENDA

Day 1: July 3, 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

- **Inaugural: Welcome** by Host Country, WHO and TACHS
- **Session 1: Building Health Workforce Capacity to Address Evolving Health Needs**

This session will explore how countries in the region are strengthening the capacity and adaptability of their health workforce to respond to shifting health demands driven by climate change, demographic transitions, evolving disease burdens, and persistent inequities. It will highlight strategies for developing a resilient, skilled, and people-centered workforce that is equipped to meet both current and future challenges.

- **Session 2: Institutional Approaches to Improve HRH Quality and Accountability**

This session will focus on how institutional mechanisms can enhance the quality and accountability of the health workforce. It will examine strategies to embed both clinical competence and compassionate, people-centered care into pre-service and in-service education and training. Additionally, the session will explore approaches for enabling community participation, monitoring, and accountability to ensure that health systems are responsive, trusted, and equitable.

Day 2: July 4, 2025, Colombo, Sri Lanka

- **Session 3: International Migration – Review and Recommendations on the EAG Interim Report on the WHO Global Code**

This session will focus on discussions on the implications of health worker migration for workforce planning, equity, and sustainability, and will aim to inform regional recommendations that reflect shared priorities, national experiences, and ethical international cooperation in health workforce mobility.

This session will enable regional consultation and input to the *Interim Report of the Expert Advisory Group (EAG)* assessing the relevance and effectiveness of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

- **Session 4: Strengthening Health Workforce Regulation – Issues, Innovations, and Consideration of a Regional Network of Health Professional Regulators**

The role of health professional regulation in ensuring patient safety is well recognized. Less recognized is the role of regulation in addressing broader health system priorities. Building on the previous three sessions, this session will facilitate cross country learning on key challenges, gaps, and innovations in regulating the health workforce, including licensing, accreditation, continuing professional development, and ensuring quality and accountability. Drawing on country experiences and good practice, the session will surface priorities for implementation of regulatory reforms and capacity-building.

The session will deliberate and consider launch of a SE Asia Regional Network of Health Professional Regulators to catalyze sustained collaboration and mutual learning across the region. Stakeholders will also help identify priority focus areas, focal points, and modalities.

Note: 5 July 2025 marks the centenary celebration of the Sri Lanka Medical Council. A selection of participants will join to learn from past successes and ongoing initiatives of the SLMC.

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Virtual Meeting Link:

<https://who.zoom.us/j/96479834570>

Meeting ID: 964 7983 4570; Passcode: UHC@2025

July 3, 2025

Time	Topic	Speakers
8:30 – 9:00	Registration	Master of Ceremonies: Ms. Prakshi Saha, Centre of Social and Economic Progress & Dr. Chatura Wijesundara, WHO Sri Lanka
9:00- 9:20	Inaugural Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Remarks from Sri Lanka Opening Remarks from The Asian Collective for Health Systems Opening Remarks, Regional Director, WHO SEARO 	<p>Dr. Anil Jasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Mass Media, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, President, Sri Lanka Medical Council</p> <p>Dr. Laveesh Bhandari, President, Centre for Social and Economic Progress</p> <p>Ms. Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO SEARO (Recorded)</p>
09:20-9:45	Context and Meeting Objectives	<p>Sandhya Venkateswaran, Senior Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress</p> <p>Mr. Ibadat Dhillon, Regional Advisor, WHO SEARO</p>
9:45-10:15	A Conversation	

Time	Topic	Speakers
	<p>“Enough money or enough workforce, which is the priority?”</p>	<p>Dr. Palitha Abeykoon, Senior Advisor, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Prof. K. Srinath Reddy, Founder Public Health Foundation of India</p> <p>Dr. Suwit Wibulpolprasert, Vice-Chair International Health Policy Foundation, Thailand</p>
10:15-1:15	<p>Session 1: Building Health Workforce Capacity to Address Evolving Health Needs (Climate, Demographic)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote and Framing of the Discussion • Breakout Groups (with country experience from Nepal, Maldives, Thailand and Vietnam) • Summary Reflections 	<p>Professor Yik-Ying Teo, Dean, Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, National University of Singapore</p> <p>Dr Revati Phalkey, Director, United Nations University</p> <p>Dr Archana Amatya, Executive Director, Nick Simon's Institute, Nepal & Dr. Yogesh Jain, Founder, Sangwari, India</p>
1:15-2:15	Lunch	
2:15-5:30	Session 2: Institutional Approaches to Improve HRH Quality and Accountability	

Time	Topic	Speakers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote and Framing of the Discussion • Breakout Groups (with country experience from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Timor-Leste) • Summary Reflection 	<p>Ms Diah S. Saminarsih, CEO, Center for Indonesia's Strategic Development Initiatives</p> <p>Dr Saroj Jayasinghe, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Colombo</p> <p>Prof Syed Ahmed, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Health Systems and UHC, BRAC & Dr. Sushil Baral, Managing Director, HERD International</p>
5:30 -5:45	Synthesis of Day 1	Dr. Borwornsom Leerapan, Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University
	Group Photo	

July 4, 2025

Time	Topic	Details
9:00 – 10:15	Government priorities in HRH: Success, Challenges and Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive session 	Moderated by: Mr. Ibadat Dhillon, Regional Advisor, WHO SEARO & Dr. Neethi Rao, Fellow, CSEP
10:15-1:15	Session 3: International Migration – Review and Recommendations on the EAG Interim Report on the WHO Global Code <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background & Presentation of Interim Report Findings Reflections on International Migration, Code Review, and South-South Cooperation Breakout Groups (Facilitated by Widjajanti Isdijoso, Director, SMERU Research Institute and EAG representatives) Summary 	<p>Dr Agya Mahat, WHO HQ, Dr. Ruth Politico, Ministry of Health, Philippines & Dr. S. Sridharan, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Prof. K. Srinath Reddy, Founder Public Health Foundation of India & Dr. Angkana Lekaguli, Secretary General, International Health Policy Foundation</p> <p>WHO & TACHS</p>
1:15 – 2:15	Lunch	

Time	Topic	Details
2:15-5:15	Session 4: Strengthening Health Professional Regulation Keynote and Framing the Discussion Breakout Groups (with country experience from India and Sri Lanka) Summary Reflections (and link to SLMC Centenary)	Mr. Ibadat Dhillon, WHO SEARO Dr. Vinod Kotwal, Additional Secretary, Medical Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India Dr. Martin Fletcher, Founding CEO Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency Prof. Harry Cayton, Harry Cayton Professional Regulation and Governance (virtual) Dr. Palitha Abeykoon, Senior Advisor, Sri Lanka
5:15 – 5:45	Synthesis from Day 2 Way Forward and Thanks	Dr. Borwornsom Leerapan, Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University WHO SEARO and CSEP