

## **Health Worker Migration Council** *History & Mandate*

**The Health Worker Migration Council** is an independent body of high-level policy makers and experts from sending and receiving countries designed to address the challenges posed by health worker migration. The Aspen Institute's Global Health and Development program serves as the Secretariat for the Council as part of the Health Worker Migration Initiative (HWMI).

HWMI began as partnership among Realizing Rights at the Aspen Institute, The Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The idea of the partnership, linking rigorous research and evidence with high level political leadership and engagement, emerged in 2006 on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Migration and Development. The HWMI was officially launched during the World Health Assembly in May of 2007 as a formal initiative of Realizing Rights, GHWA and WHO. The HWMI was composed of two closely linked entities, the Council whose secretariat was Realizing Rights/Aspen, and the Technical Working Group whose secretariat was WHO/HRH.

The unique partnership was integral to the development of the Code. The Council under Realizing Rights/Aspen, an independent body and authority, allowed for a channel that could run parallel to the formal WHO process in shaping and advancing negotiations. The Council was able to complement the WHO Secretariat's efforts by deeply engaging with specific Member States and hosting a series of inter-regional discussions in order to clarify and further consensus around contentious issues.

Through HWMI, Realizing Rights/Aspen was involved with the Code development from the very inception of the process. The Council co-chaired by Hon. Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Dr. Francis Omaswa, Executive Director of GHWA, played a significant role in supporting the development of the Code. The Council aimed to further mutually acceptable solutions to the issue of health worker migration in a manner that honored both the right to health and freedom of movement. Through its members and meetings, the Council provided both political and technical support to the work of the WHO Department of Human Resources for Health in the development of the Code.

The Realizing Rights/Aspen program continues with Aspen Global Health and Development as the Council Secretariat and has as its mission to illuminate solutions and promising efforts that address the challenges associated with health worker migration.

In 2010, the Aspen Institute reconstituted the Council and welcomed Senator Tom Daschle as the new co-chair with the continuing leadership of Dr. Francis Omaswa. The passing of the Code was a great success and now the Council will continue to address the challenges of health worker migration while shifting to focus on the implementation of the Code and other innovations to address health worker migration.

As its mandate, the Council believes that globally respected ethical norms, innovative collaborations between source and destination countries and efforts to develop sustainable workforce solutions will encourage better health worker migration governance while facilitating a more equitable distribution of health workers across the globe. The Council works in partnership with WHO, GHWA, Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative (HWAI) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The Council strives to identify, assess, and promote innovative policies to address the challenges posed by health worker migration and global disparities in the health workforce. Specifically, the Council aims to ensure that the ethical principles, outlined in the WHO Global Code and other policy mechanisms, result in the development of policies and efforts that better manage the gains and losses associated with the international migration of health workers while ultimately striving to improve health outcomes for all.