



SEVENTY-FOURTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Provisional agenda item 15

Health workforce

May 2021

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), and on behalf of the over 27 million nurses worldwide, thanks Member States for the draft resolution "Strengthening nursing and midwifery: investments in education, jobs, leadership and service delivery", which includes the adoption of the updated Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021-2025. ICN strongly supports adoption of the resolution by the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly.

ICN wishes to thank the WHO and the dedicated team of nurses and midwives for the Strategic Directions which present evidence-based practices and policy priorities that will support countries to ensure that nurses and midwives optimally contribute to achieving universal health coverage and population health goals. With the COVID-19 pandemic revealing the existing and deepening fault lines in our health systems, there could not be a more important time to develop an action-orientated strategy to support real change and improvements for nurses.

ICN was closely involved in the development of the Strategic Directions and, along with its member National Nurses Associations and Nursing Now groups, strongly supports the strategy's call for investment in nursing and midwifery education, jobs, leadership, and service delivery.

Integrating the planning for and investing in nursing into broader national health systems and health workforce planning will be critical in the post COVID-19 era and the Strategic Directions provide clear recommendations to Member States to do so. As The Independent Panel reports, health care workers, of which 60% are nurses, are the glue holding health systems together. To enable the full contribution of nurses in managing and recovering from the pandemic, countries must include implementation of the Strategic Directions in their COVID-19 recovery plans.

ICN wishes to highlight the importance of monitoring the strategy over the next four years. There is a need to create measurable indicators for the data and the four policy areas against which implementation of the strategy can be monitored. Considering the impact that the COVID-19 Effect will have on the nursing workforce over the coming years, ICN recommends an assessment of progress at the mid-point of the strategy in 2023. This could be particularly useful if coinciding with a second State of the World's Nursing report.

In this International Year of the Health and Care worker and at this pivotal point in history, ICN calls on Member States to support, protect and invest in nurses and all healthcare workers.