Nursing and development

ICN Position:

As an advocate for healthy communities and sustainable development, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) collaborates with nursing, health care and other organisations to identify the health needs of populations at risk. ICN works strategically to enable nurses in government, regulatory bodies, national nurses associations (NNAs) and other nursing and non-nursing leaders to develop and achieve goals for nursing and health care that take into account local needs, local socio-political, demographic and economic conditions and constraints, and the local cultural context.

ICN invests its resources to produce the maximum beneficial effect on health outcomes, and the development of nursing and health care. It supports local, cost-effective approaches to health systems development, including, as part of fostering health and social justice within society, the just treatment and security of nurses and health professionals. Within nursing, ICN’s emphasis is on strengthening national nurses associations so as to enhance self-reliance and foster their ability to help others.

ICN values the ‘cascade’ approach in development, where the expectation is that, in return for assistance, partners will help others in a like manner. This also involves taking responsibility and creating conditions for local development within a framework that emphasises the principles of justice, equity, non-discrimination, transparency and flexibility.

ICN supports development strategies and policies that:

- Increase resources and at the same time provide adequate prosperity to improve health and well being and reduce health inequalities, and provide equitable, cost-effective, access to health care.
- Strengthen women’s and children’s capacity to exercise more control over their lives and living conditions.
- Encourage interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral collaboration.
- Protect the natural environment.
- Support infrastructure development in nursing and health.
- Help groups to help themselves and others.
Background:

ICN’s vision is a healthy world where access to health is a basic human right. ICN works with governments, national and international organisations in helping populations to attain a level of health that will permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life.

ICN views development as creating conditions that allow populations to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs\(^1\). For us, sustainable development is concerned with providing a framework whereby groups, communities and individuals have access to resources and opportunities, and exercise their rights, using them to create infrastructures that promote healthy communities.

Strengthening the nursing profession is key to improving world health. In fulfilling its mandate to represent nursing worldwide, advance the profession and shape health policy, ICN strives to base its programmes and initiatives on its values of visionary leadership, inclusiveness, flexibility, partnership, and achievement.

Adopted in 2000
Reviewed and revised in 2007

The International Council of Nurses is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all and sound health policies globally.