

11 June 2025

Helsinki Communique

At the 2025 meeting of the International Council of Nurses' Council of National Nursing Associations (CNR), in Helsinki, Finland, the leaders of ICN's 140 National Nursing Association members, representing 137 countries, regions and territories globally, highlighted the most pressing issues facing the nursing profession around the world. In this communique:

1. **ICN urges immediate action to address the compelling evidence for greater investment in and support for nursing – it is not a cost: it is a smart investment for the future.** Many reports, including the [2025 State of the World's Nursing](#) (SOWN) report and the [ICN survey of NNA Presidents](#), have shown concerning findings. Other ICN reports, such as the [Economic Power of Care](#) and [Caring for Nurses Strengthens Economies](#), have provided compelling evidence for the economic value of nursing and the need for urgent investment in nurses to improve health outcomes, strengthen economies, and build more resilient societies. CNR 2025 reaffirms its commitment to the 10 policy actions outlined in the ICN [Charter for Change](#).
2. **ICN calls for fair pay, decent working conditions, and supportive, positive workplace cultures as well effective workload management and efficiency measures to create safe and sustainable working environments.** Nursing workforce planning must address staffing models that ensure safe staffing, and emphasize the retention and ethical recruitment of nurses, which are crucial to the provision of excellent health care services. We must reimagine how health care systems value, nurture and protect nurses' physical and mental health, including zero tolerance for violence in all settings. No nurse should experience risks to their health and well-being simply by doing their job.

3. **ICN calls for the strengthening of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.** SOWN 2025 shows an extremely unequal distribution of nurses across countries and regions. Inequitable international migration patterns and unethical recruitment of nurses from countries with fragile health systems exacerbate inequalities. If wealthy countries take nurses from elsewhere, they must give something back in return. CNR 2025 urges a commitment to mutuality in any recruitment, including compensation for vulnerable source countries losing their nurses, and a strengthened and binding Code.
4. **ICN demands that international humanitarian law is enforced to ensure the protection of health care workers, patients and facilities.** The latest report from the [Safeguarding Health Care in Conflict Coalition](#) shows a 15% increase in attacks against health care since 2023. CNR representatives approved a resolution strongly condemning all attacks on health care personnel, patients and facilities; and called on all governments and parties to armed conflict to fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect health personnel, patients, facilities, and civilians. ICN also calls for unhindered access to humanitarian aid. Commending and standing in solidarity with nurses and health care workers who continue to provide care under the most dangerous and difficult conditions, the resolution reaffirms ICN's firm stance and unwavering commitment to advocate for peace, protect and support nurses affected by conflict and disasters, and promote the neutrality and sanctity of health care everywhere. Nurses are health makers, but they are also peace makers.
5. **ICN advocates for the strengthening of nursing regulation, education, and professional development globally.** The essential role of strong, transparent and adequately resourced nursing regulation is a cornerstone of patient safety, workforce sustainability and public confidence in health systems. ICN's CNR called for the establishment and reinforcement of national nursing acts and regulatory frameworks that reflect the updated ICN Definition of Nursing, safeguard professional standards, ensure patient safety – including culturally safe practice which enables patient choice – and support the rights of nurses and the populations they serve. CNR also

highlighted the urgent need to increase education capacity to produce a self-sufficient supply of nurses where needed. CNR believes it is critical for countries to aspire to degree preparation to become a registered nurse. Countries must also allow unimpeded access to education and continuing professional development programmes worldwide. Such measures are required to both retain nurses and produce the practice-ready nurses of the future needed to transform the delivery of care.

6. **ICN believes nurses are uniquely positioned to address the health challenges of today and the future, including by adopting and adapting an accelerating digital environment, embracing technology being mindful to preserve the human connection, detecting and addressing health effects of climate change, and playing central roles in the transformation of health care systems.** CNR 2025 emphasized the critical importance of scaling nurse-led innovations and models of care, including a Primary Health Care approach. It is time to harness the power and influence of nurse leaders and advanced practitioners and translate it into properly funded, people-centred, and nurse-led care.
7. **ICN affirms the importance of nursing leadership and calls for nursing leaders to have real power and authority in decision-making. CNR 2025 emphasized the need to create and support opportunities for nurses' professional growth and leadership, including by expanding advanced practice nursing roles, and establishing clear pathways for career progression.** CNR called for the strengthening of national nursing associations as important vehicles to represent, advocate and support nurses both nationally and internationally, as well as to address the challenges faced by the profession, and improve health care for all. ICN's members are committed to working with student and early career nurses to empower future generations of nurse leaders the world so urgently needs.