



See ICN's #WHA79 statements, Key Messages Briefing, [previous daily updates](#) and more on the [virtual delegation](#) webpage

What's on today – Thursday 21 May

Committee A will open this morning and continue the discussion on Item 11 Recommitting to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination and Item 12.3 Communicable diseases. ICN will deliver a statement on item 12.3.

Important items on the agenda scheduled for today:

- 12.1 Follow-up to the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases
- 12.2 Mental health ***ICN has a statement on this item**
- 14.5 Public health implications of the unprovoked attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran on civilians and essential civilian infrastructure in Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan
- 12.4 Universal health coverage
 - Draft global strategy for integrated emergency, critical and operative care, 2026–2035 ***ICN has a statement on this item**
- 12.5 Primary healthcare ***ICN has a statement on this item**
- 12.7 Substandard and falsified medical products
- 12.9 Draft updated global action plan on antimicrobial resistance
- 12.6 Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ***ICN is part of a constituency statement on this item**
- 12.10 Harmonization of regulatory approaches, governance and standards for data, digital health and artificial intelligence in the health sector

If time permits:

- 15.1 Strengthening rehabilitation in health systems
- 15.3 The health of Indigenous Peoples

- 15.4 Maternal, infant and young child nutrition

Important agenda items in Committee B:

- 17.2 continued Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem
- 20.1 Reform of the global health architecture and the UN80 Initiative – ICN is part of a constituency statement on this item

Please consult the [Daily Journal No.4](#) for today

Wednesday 20 May Highlights

Committee A and B discussions

Following the discussion on item 14.4 Implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022), the Committee voted to approve draft decision [WHA79/A79_ACONF1](#) “Health emergency in Ukraine and refugee-receiving and -hosting countries, stemming from the Russian Federation’s aggression”.

Committee A closed last night, suspending discussion on item 12.3 Communicable diseases. ICN’s statement on this agenda item will be delivered when the discussion resumes.

Side Events

ICN Nurses Luncheon

ICN hosted a high-profile invitation-only Nurses Luncheon with over 50 in-person attendees including WHO Chief Nursing Officer Amelia Latu Afuhaamango Tuipulotu, Taiwanese Minister of Health and Welfare Shih Chung-Liang, along with Chief Nursing Officers, global nursing leaders and partners from ICM, ILO, ICRC, WPA, IFNA, the BBC, JCI, TruMerit, G4 Alliance, Global



ICN Nurses Luncheon

Health Partnerships and many other organizations representing health and humanitarian issues from around the world.

ICN was represented by President José Luis Cobos Serrano, 1st Vice-President Sineva Ribeiro, Board member T. Dileep Kumar, CEO Howard Catton, and several team members. Our 150-person Virtual Delegation, including several Board Members, joined online from across the world. The event underscored the strength and scale of the WHA79 ICN and nursing presence. It demonstrated the collective power of the nursing voice, bringing together nurse leaders and advocates to advance a shared vision for nursing investment, empowerment, and leadership in global health.



The ICN President delivered a powerful speech referencing current global health challenges including the Ebola outbreak in DRC and Uganda, and messages that nurses are once again lacking PPE and fearful for their safety. He stressed that there is no global health security without protecting nurses, the backbone of health, on the front lines of every health emergency. He highlighted ICN's IND theme *Empowered Nurses Save Lives* and report showcasing the Seven Powers of Nursing, urging nurses everywhere to own and name their powers and urging all leaders to structurally enable and invest in nursing impact.

WHO Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Dr Amelia Latu Afuhaamango Tuipulotu brought an energizing message, calling on the world's 30 million nurses to step forward, lead boldly, and train the next generation. She spoke of the power of nurses

and midwives standing united with communities to accelerate equity and progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Taiwanese Minister of Health and Welfare Shih Chung-Liang warmly invited all nurses to the ICN Congress in Taipei in July 2027 and reaffirmed his strong commitment to nursing and to global health collaboration.

ICN Senior Policy Advisor Erica Burton outlined the breadth of ICN's WHA79 engagement and introduced the in-person delegation: Dr Cobos Serrano, Sineva Ribeiro, Howard Catton, Policy Advisors Erica Burton and Hoi Shan Fokeladeh, ICN SECN Alliance Chair Josephine Agyei, and ICN Communications Advisor Gillian Moore.



She highlighted over 20 priority agenda items, including key ICN interventions that are being delivered on mental health, immunization, health emergencies, and primary health care, and a constituency statement co-led with 16+ non-state actors on the Economics of Health for All. She discussed ICN's participation in over 50 side events and bilateral meetings across the week; and reminded participants to consult the ICN WHA report that will be released in a few months and can be used year-round as a reference for advocacy and decision making.

ICN Alliance of Student and Early Career Nurses Chair Josephine Agyei spoke on behalf of the next generation of nursing, highlighting the success of the ICN SECN Alliance in providing a voice and platform for the future of nursing. She called for



investment in student and early career nurses as well as mentorship, leadership development, and meaningful inclusion of early career nurses in policy spaces.

ICN CEO Howard Catton moderated the event and underlined ongoing advocacy priorities for ICN, including accelerating the *WHO Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery* which ICN lobbied strongly to extend at last year's World Health Assembly, strengthening ethical recruitment protections under the WHO Global Code, and ICN's #NursesForPeace campaign, humanitarian work, and partnership with Direct Relief.

Sustaining the Global Health and Care Workforce Agenda in times of financial challenges (19 May)

The ICN CEO attended and gave an intervention at this official WHO side event held in the Palais des Nations, co-organized by the World Medical Association, Germany, the Philippines, Ethiopia, France, India, and Indonesia. The session focused on sustaining investment in the health workforce amidst current global health financing pressures, with a core message that the health workforce is not a cost but an investment: essential for resilient health systems, universal health coverage, and all global health goals. In his comments, Mr Catton called for a bolder approach to co-investment for health workforce strengthening, particularly in the context of inequitable migration/recruitment, and provided examples of specific financial vehicles to achieve this.



Access to Care in Crisis Settings workshop (19 May)

ICN 1st Vice-President Sineva Ribeiro participated in this interactive workshop entitled "Access to Care in Crisis Settings: Rethinking Cooperation in Practice," co-organized by the Geneva Health Forum and Terre des Hommes. The session was part of the 2026 Geneva Health Forum reflection on "Rethinking Cooperation in Global Health" and brought together frontline health workers, humanitarian actors, and policy stakeholders from organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Action Contre la Faim, ALIMA, Première Urgence Internationale, and Geneva University Hospitals, among others. The

workshop critically examined systemic barriers to healthcare access in conflict and protracted crisis settings, looking at where cooperation breaks down in practice and identifying practical actions for must urgently change to improve access to care in crisis-affected settings.

Health Workforce at WHA 2026: Sustaining Health Workforce as a Global Health Priority

Howard Catton joined this high-level, invite-only round table hosted by the World Medical Association. The discussion brought together a wide range of health workforce representative groups, including health professionals as well as representatives of other health worker groups, reflecting the breadth of workforce challenges and the importance of collaboration across the health workforce. The event strongly emphasized critical importance of interprofessional teams and the need to advocate for far greater global focus on supporting, enabling, and investing in team-based care.

IAPO Co-hosted Event on Flexible, People-Centred Primary Health Care

The ICN CEO spoke at a side event co-hosted by the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO), Harvard, UNAIDS, Harvard Medical School Program in Global Primary Health Care and Roche, and including the Lancet Global Health Commission, focused on showcasing stories and case studies that show what is possible



when care is designed around people's needs and lived realities. Mr Catton highlighted that people-centred values are deeply embedded in nursing ethics and everyday practice, discussed how nurses are uniquely positioned to deliver holistic, person-centred care across all settings, and shared powerful examples of people-centred care delivered by nurses.

Shaping the future of brain health: what it means for economic growth

ICN Senior Policy Advisor Hoi Shan Fokeladeh joined a breakfast discussion hosted by Economist Enterprise and Sanofi on “Shaping the future of brain health: what it means for economic growth”. It brought together global experts to examine brain health as a strategic priority for both health systems and economic growth. Drawing on findings from a recent Economist Enterprise report, panelists used multiple sclerosis as a case study to explore system-level barriers to integrating brain health



into broader health and economic policy, and to identify practical opportunities for progress.

WHA Salon Dinner

Hoi Shan Fokeladeh attended the WHA Salon Dinner which was organized by the Frontline Health Workers Coalition and brought together a diverse group of stakeholders for a solutions-oriented dialogue on the future of the global health workforce. Health systems around the world are under mounting strain from constrained financing, rising demand, and rapid technological change. Against this backdrop, ICN, along with key partners, explored what it will take to put the workforce at the heart of health system strategy.

Bilateral Meetings

ICN President José Luis Cobos Serrano and Senior Policy Advisor Erica Burton attended a Bilateral meeting with the Secretariat of Work Management and Health Education of the Ministry of Health of Brazil (SGTES/MOH Brazil), represented by its Secretary, Dr. Felipe Proenço. Key priorities included nurse migration, educational pathways to bridge gaps between technical-level and Bachelor prepared nurses, advanced practice nursing roles, remuneration and working conditions.

Dr Cobos Serrano and Erica Burton also attended a Bilateral meeting with Cathrine M. Lofthus, Director General of Health, Norway who was accompanied by two nurse colleagues, Priya Miriam Lerberg, Advisor at Norwegian Directorate of Health, and the Norwegian delegation youth representative and President of the Norwegian Student Federation Henriette Karlsen Brenna. Priorities included the protection of health workers and healthcare in conflict, data collection for workforce strategies, retention and recruitment included the attractiveness of the profession for students, working conditions and efforts to increase collaboration with municipalities and specialist health services.



ICN CEO Meeting with Direct Relief

The ICN CEO met with Direct Relief's CEO , Amy Weaver, to discuss the ongoing and impactful ICN-Direct Relief partnership and the ICN [#NursesForPeace](#) work they support, with impact across 10 countries.

The collaboration channels humanitarian support directly to nurses and National Nursing Associations (NNAs) in conflict and crisis settings, strengthening nurses' ability to continue delivering care to vulnerable communities and drawing on NNAs' expertise as trusted frontline partners who provide real-time intelligence on community needs and facilitate the delivery of essential medical supplies and resources where they are most needed.

The discussion also addressed the developing Ebola outbreak in the DRC and Uganda, with both leaders underlining the urgency of ensuring frontline nurses are protected and supported. They explored the importance of investing in nurse leadership development, and discussed opportunities to further strengthen collaboration between the two organizations to support nurses, NNAs, and the communities they serve in humanitarian emergencies worldwide.



Social Media Highlights

ICN-International Council of Nurses
4h · Edited · 🌐

El presidente del CIE, **Jose Luis Cobos Serrano**, transmite un mensaje contundente sobre la importancia fundamental del empoderamiento de la enfermería en la **#AMS79**.

🔗 Leer más: bit.ly/4nFpdzf
🔗 Explorar nuestros mensajes clave: bit.ly/43jycfZ

#NuestrasEnfermerasNuestroFuturo

Show translation

“
La agenda de salud global es también una agenda de enfermería. El CIE lleva una fuerte presencia del personal de enfermería a la **#AMS79** y hace un llamado a la acción para empoderar estructuralmente a los 30 millones de enfermeras en todo el mundo. Ante emergencias sanitarias y conflictos, se nos recuerda el poder del personal de enfermería para llevar salud y esperanza, así como la urgente necesidad de proteger la seguridad de cada profesional.

José Luis Cobos Serrano
Presidente del CIE



ICN-International Council of Nurses
48,601 Followers
7h · Edited · 🌐

ICN President **Jose Luis Cobos Serrano** joined global health leaders at a key **#WHA79 World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)** side event to deliver a clear message: health professionals are not a cost, they are one of the ...more



Health workforce issues must remain central to WHO's agenda, even faced with the current funding difficulties. The workforce is fundamental to achieving UHC, patient safety, emergency preparedness and the wider Economics of Health for All agenda.

Jose Luis Cobos Serrano
PRESIDENT

ICN-International Council of Nurses
now · 🌐

A powerful moment today as ICN hosted the Nurses' Luncheon on the margins of **#WHA79**, bringing together nurse leaders and allies from across the globe to connect and engage in key global health discussions.

With 150+ attendees joining virtually, the impact reached far beyond the venue, showcasing the strength of the global nursing community.

Key participants included ICN President **Jose Luis Cobos Serrano**, ICN 1st Vice-President **Sineva Ribeiro**, **World Health Organization** Chief Nursing Officer **Amelia Latu Afuhamango Tuipulotu**, ICN CEO **Howard Catton**, ICN Board member **T. Dileep Kumar**, Taiwanese Minister of Health and Welfare **Shih Chung-Liang**, ICN Senior Policy Advisors **Erica Burton, RN, MPH, CGNC** and **Hoi Shan Fokeladeh**, ICN Alliance of Student & Early Career Nurses Steering Committee Chair **Josephine Agyei**, and several other global health and nursing leaders and partners.

🔗 Read our **#WHA79** statements: bit.ly/4fq0Mni
🔗 Explore our key messages: bit.ly/4ul9Qyj

