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Item 5(s) Strategic framework for implementation of Immunization Agenda 2030 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing over 30 million nurses worldwide, acknowledges this progress report and expresses deep concern that the number of zero-dose children remains high in the Region, particularly among populations affected by conflict, displacement and fragile health systems.

Immunization is one of the most powerful tools to protect population health and strengthen global health security. Vaccines prevent disability, illness and death, and reduce the spread of drug-resistant infections, preserving the effectiveness of antibiotics. Yet in the face of climate change, migration, conflict and urbanization, vaccine-preventable diseases can spread rapidly. Realizing the far-reaching health, social and economic benefits of immunization requires strong primary health care, reliable vaccine supplies, and a well-prepared, adequately resourced health workforce capable of ensuring safe, uninterrupted vaccine delivery, including during crises.

Nurses are at the heart of immunization programmes. They drive integration with other essential health services and are often the closest point of contact for underserved communities, particularly in reaching unvaccinated, under-vaccinated, displaced, mobile and neglected populations. Nurses also play important roles in surveillance, community engagement and strengthening public trust.

ICN urges Member States to adopt laws, regulations and policies that optimize the nursing workforce and protect health workers delivering immunization programmes, including in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings. Nurses must be enabled to practise to the full extent of their education and have access to essential immunizations to safeguard their own health. Health workers, facilities and immunization services must be protected from violence and attacks.

ICN also stresses the need for continuous professional development in immunization and adequate staffing and resources. Countries must identify and address barriers to vaccination, including vaccine hesitancy, inequitable access and misinformation.

Actively involving nurses and nursing organizations in planning and implementing immunization strategies will be key to strengthening trust, increasing equitable coverage and achieving Immunization Agenda 2030.