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Primary health care

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the over 20 million nurses worldwide. This year we celebrate the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. The world will unite in the celebration of the benefits that nursing brings to the health of the global population.

The numerous case studies in ICN's International Nurses Day publication showcase the incredible contribution nurses make to primary health care (PHC) on a day-to-day basis. The case studies show nurses often being the first, and sometimes only, healthcare professional in communities and highlight how they increase access to healthcare and are central to high-quality people-centered PHC models that are at the core of integrated health services throughout the life course. It is estimated that nurses provide more than 80% of primary care services and are leading innovative PHC initiatives worldwide. Nurses are also important to effectively engage the community as an actor in the development of interventions and action.

ICN is pleased that WHO's special programme on PHC will be put forward to accelerate progress across the three components of PHC. We strongly support its implementation with respect to countries' specific demographics and health needs. With the global shortfall of nine million nurses and midwives by 2030, it is imperative that governments prioritise their investments in nursing education and longer-term nursing workforce planning to build a well-educated and robust nursing workforce.

ICN believes that nurses are essential to achieve the substantial transformation to reorient health systems and we strongly encourage Member States to actively involve nurses in the process to integrate PHC into policies, strategies, activities and services. ICN is committed to working with its stakeholders to this end.

Thank you.