



WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD 148th SESSION

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Global action on patient safety

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The International Council of Nurses (ICN) welcomes the global patient safety action plan and is pleased to have contributed to its development.

As nursing care spans all areas of care delivery and nurses address patient safety in all aspects of care, the nursing profession is recognised as central to improving the quality and safety of healthcare everywhere. Having nurses involved in the design and operation of patient safety plans and policy interventions will greatly contribute to their success. In this regard, ICN is supporting nurse leaders from its National Nurses Associations to work with Ministries of Health and national partners to develop and implement national patient safety action plans in line with the global plan.

The designation of World Patient Safety Day has been an important step in gaining global attention on the importance of patient safety and crucial for ICN to highlight the impact of nurses in ensuring patient safety. In 2020, this international day highlighted the launch of the Health Worker Safety Charter which calls on governments and local health service leaders to take five actions to better protect health workers. The Charter supports ICN's firm belief that that health worker safety and patient safety are two sides of the same coin. ICN firmly supports the Charter and encourages all governments to sign and act on it.

ICN's September 2020 report, *Protecting Nurses from COVID-19: a Top Priority*, revealed the true extent of the dangers nurses face at work including violence and abuse, unsafe staffing levels, work-related stress, and severe personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages. If nurses and healthcare workers are not protected, the safety of patients cannot be guaranteed.

To save lives and create high reliability health systems, governments must commit to putting healthcare worker and patient safety centre stage in the design and delivery of healthcare services.