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## **ICN snapshot survey: In the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife approximately only half the countries of the world have a Chief Nursing Officer**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 30 January 2020** – Snapshot survey by ICN reveals that only 50% of countries have a Chief Nursing Officer which is a brake on progress for healthcare for all.

The International Council of Nurses is calling on all governments to appoint strategic-level Government Chief Nursing Officers (GCNOs) with the authority to play a vital role in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating health policies and health systems.

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

*“GCNOs are critical to achieving national health goals and improving access and outcomes of healthcare for individuals, families and communities. Their expertise substantially informs the development of health policies, delivery of health systems and ensures the optimal use of the nursing workforce, to plan, and coordinate the nursing profession to best meet the needs of the population it serves.”*

He added that although approximately two-thirds (67%) of countries report having a GCNO ‘focal point’, many of these positions do not have the authority to advise and influence at a strategic level, and that the full range of responsibilities and resources associated with the GCNO role are essential to directly influencing health policy formulation. Some focal points are not even Registered Nurses.

Mr Catton continued:

*“Our survey indicates that only half the world’s GCNOs are operating at a strategic level with the authority to inform and lead health policy decision-making and ensure the optimal contribution and support for the Nursing profession. This is a clear indication that the world has not fully grasped the potential of GCNOs and in far too many countries the role is either non-existent, under recognised or still at a distance from central decision-making.”*

*“This situation, which we believe has changed little over the past 25 years, cannot be allowed to continue. In this, the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, ICN calls on all governments to appoint a GCNO who is a Registered Nurse, believes that*

*a GCNO role should exist in every country, and that their contribution is essential to health improvement globally.”*

ICN's call to action on strategic-level Chief Nursing Officers can be found [here](#).

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#### **Note to Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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