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Report highlights critical work by International Council of Nurses to safeguard nurses and advocate for investment

Geneva, Switzerland, 11 March 2022 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has marked the two year anniversary of the declaration by the World Health Organization of COVID-19 as a pandemic by publishing a report of its work on COVID in 2021, entitled [*The International Year of the Health and Care Worker and the COVID-19 Pandemic*](#).

Following ICN's 2020 report, [*The International Year of the Nurse and Midwife and the COVID-19 pandemic*](#), the 2021 report tracks ICN's work month by month from January 2021 to March 2022. The report highlights several significant ICN publications, press releases and statements on the effect of the pandemic on nurses' mental and physical health, including stress, burnout, traumatisation, as well as infections and deaths. It also highlights the impacts on the nursing workforce in terms of education, workload and the global nursing shortage.

ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano said:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on all of society, but the health workforce has undoubtedly suffered the most. When we look at what nurses have endured, there is no doubt that many will be leaving the profession unless serious measures are enacted to retain the existing workforce and attract young people to take up the profession.

This report shows the many ways in which ICN has been publishing the research into the effects of the pandemic on the nursing workforce as well as the recommendations to address the threats to the profession including the need for investment.”

The new report also contains success stories from across the world, which show the ways in which ICN member national nursing associations have influenced their governments to improve nurses' salaries and working conditions, education and training, and appoint a Chief Nursing Officer. It also contains testimonies which highlight the incredible lengths to which nurses will go to care for their patients.

In an [*Op-Ed*](#) published today in [*Health Policy Watch*](#), ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

“Unless the global nursing workforce is brought up to full strength, even when the pandemic is finally over, grand plans about healthcare for all will be nothing more than pipe dreams.

Policymakers who do not have nurses sitting alongside them at the top table are flying blind: their policies will end up being short-sighted and incomplete. Because the solution to tackling intractable global health problems, such as the growth in non-communicable diseases, is right under our noses. Having nurses working in advanced roles, and services based on nurse-led models, are the keys to the brighter future we all deserve.

But nurses will only be able to fulfil their potential if all governments wake up to what they must do, and take action on the sustained measures necessary to bring about the massive growth in the nursing workforce that is needed right now.

The war in Ukraine is going to make this even more difficult, as governments look to increase their defence spending, rather than enhance their health budgets. But health and peace are inseparable.

And whenever I hear governments say they can't afford to invest in their nurses? I say, they can't afford not to."

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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.

For more information please contact Gyorgy Madarasz, Press Officer at madarasz@icn.ch

Tel: +41 22 908 01 16

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