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International Council of Nurses is delighted to welcome back the United Kingdom Royal College of Nursing

Geneva, Switzerland, 31 March 2022 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is delighted to announce that the UK Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has re-joined ICN, reuniting two of the world's oldest and most influential professional nursing organisations at a time when the world needs nurses and nurse leadership like never before. ICN is pleased to renew its close relationship with the RCN and UK nurses which goes back more than a century.

RCN has over that time provided much welcomed nursing leadership and expertise within ICN, and its presence once again will strengthen and reinforce ICN's ability to tackle the big global health challenges, including the pandemic, exacerbated by climate change and geopolitical instability.

The RCN, founded in 1916, is now one of the largest professional associations and unions for nursing staff in the world, with nearly half a million individual members. Re-joining the ICN strengthens the RCN's commitment to working with nursing and health care organisations worldwide and builds influence on an international level. It gives members opportunities to share the expertise of UK nursing and drive improvements on the issues that matter most to the profession.

The history of UK nursing is deeply intertwined with the development of international nursing and the recognition that healthcare is global. Some of the leading figures in the history of British nursing such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, Edith Cavell and ICN founder Ethel Gordon Fenwick were at the forefront of advancing nursing internationally over the last century and forging relationships and solidarity between the profession globally.

ICN is delighted to welcome back RCN following their membership led consultation. The strength of ICN is its more than 130 National Nursing Associations and the millions of nurses worldwide that they represent. Through our solidarity we are committed to maximising our impact and influence to protect and advance nurses and nursing globally. One of the many strategic areas that RCN will immediately contribute to is ICN's membership taskforce which looks to grow the organisation's capacity and sphere of influence still further.

ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano said:

“It gives me great pleasure to welcome the RCN back into ICN. The RCN has a long and illustrious history of representing nurses and advancing the profession, and their membership of ICN is extremely positive not only for the organisations but nurses globally. ICN is a member led organisation that recognises the importance of listening to and working closely with its associations to demonstrate maximum impact and influence on behalf of nurses around the world.

‘On behalf of ICN's member National Nursing Associations I look forward to working with the RCN on the challenges we all face, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the global nursing shortage, gender and equity issues, as well as the current geo-political upheaval and climate change.

‘Together we will be stronger and have a greater influence in the world, or as the first president of ICN, Ethel Gordon Fenwick reflected, ‘by union alone can the necessary strength be found’.”

RCN President Denise Chaffer said:

“This is a hugely significant day. Our members voted to strengthen our commitment to working closer with colleagues around the world, through membership of the ICN.

‘Being part of the ICN means we will promote our UK nursing expertise around the world. It gives members the opportunity to drive improvements on the issues that matter most, and to share knowledge as well as learning from others.

‘We’ll work together on issues such as humanitarian support, ethical international recruitment, addressing the global shortage of nursing staff, and recovery from the global pandemic.

‘The conflict in Ukraine is stark reminder of how we must continue to stand in solidarity with our international colleagues. Our membership will allow us to do so more closely wherever a crisis hits.”

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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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