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WHO Director General and Irish Prime Minister praise contribution of Advanced Practice Nurses at ICN Conference

Geneva, Switzerland; Dublin, Ireland; 22 August 2022 – The 12th International Council of Nurses (ICN) Nurse Practitioner and Advanced Practice Network (NP/APN) Conference opened yesterday, Sunday 21 August, in Dublin, Ireland, under the theme *Advanced Practice Nursing: Shaping the Future of Healthcare*.

The Prime Minister of Ireland, Micheál Martin, started the Opening Ceremony, which also included addresses from Dr Pamela Cipriano, ICN President and Dr Karen Bjørø, ICN Second Vice President. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), gave the Opening Address saying advanced practice nurses (APNs) have essential roles to play.

Dr Tedros said: “We know that nurse and midwives can safely provide a large proportion of primary healthcare services and the foundation of universal health coverage. And yet, far too many do not have the opportunity to work to the full extent of their education and training. The WHO remains committed working with all of you to support the leadership, the recognition, safeguarding and advancement of nurses and midwives, and all health and care workers around the world. I thank you.”

Prime Minister Martin said the conference, with its impressive line-up of speakers, would inspire thought-provoking exchanges among the many delegates.

Mr Martin said: “The theme of this year’s conference is shaping the future of healthcare, and recent global healthcare events have shown us your capacity to do exactly that. When advanced practitioners are located in sufficient numbers in specific areas, they can have a real impact in addressing some of the key challenges in the health service, including management of long-term conditions, improving patient access to services and reducing waiting times. Needless to say, patients greatly value the difference these services make to their overall health and wellbeing. I want to thank all nurses and midwives for the impact that you make on the health and lives of the public in Ireland and around the world.”

In her address, Dr Cipriano spoke about her presidential watchword ‘influence’ and her aim to strengthen ICN and nursing’s ability to influence health policy so that nurses and nursing are recognised, supported and invested in so that they can lead and deliver health for all.

“Advanced practice nurses and midwives are a critical force for achieving that influence. I believe nurses are all asking for a new normal, and that is not a return to a pre-pandemic health system that didn’t really value nurses and APNs. It is a status with new appreciation, respect and guarantees that nurses will routinely be involved in decisions, able to practice with sufficient resources in every setting, be protected from risks, violence and harm, and be treated with fair and equitable pay. We deserve nothing less.”

Dr Bjørø spoke about how international collaboration and cooperation can have an important impact on national and local health services. She said the pandemic had thrown a spotlight on the

importance of APNs and that their expertise “will be critical to get back on track to achieving the sustainable development goals, and Universal Health Coverage.”

The Opening Ceremony also included welcome addresses from Karen McGowan, President of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO); Elizabeth Iro, WHO Chief Nursing Officer; Dr Daniela Lehwaldt, Chair of the ICN NP/APN Network; Christine McDermott, Chairperson, Irish Association of Advanced Nurse Midwife Practitioners (IAANMP); and Steven Pitman, Head of Education and Professional Development at INMO.

In collaboration with the INMO and IAANMP, the NP/APN Conference will continue until 24 August, showcasing and celebrating advances in nursing and midwifery practice from around the world. Over the next three days, participants at the ICN NP/APN Conference will learn from keynote speakers, including Rachel Kenna, Ireland’s Chief Nursing Officer; Dr Mabel Magowe, Deputy Dean Faculty of Health Sciences at University of Botswana; and Ber Oomen, Executive Director of the European Specialist Nurses Organisation.

Dr Michelle Acorn, ICN’s Chief Nursing Officer will give today’s keynote address entitled “A Global APN Voice – a local system and patient choice” examining the critical roles APNs can play in the delivery of health services across the life span.

ICN Chief Executive Officer, Howard Catton, who will conclude the conference on 24 August, said:

“Advanced Practice Nurses are one of the fastest growing health professions – and for a good reason. APNs are essential for enabling healthcare systems to develop innovative ways to improve access to care, achieve better health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. The APN role is expanding across the world and helping us all to meet the changing needs of the global population and the growing challenges of disease.

‘Nursing is the golden thread that links healthcare policy and practice. It holds the solution to many of the healthcare problems the world is facing, especially when nurses are highly educated and able to deliver care to the full extent of their scope of practice. And that is why we are calling for governments to urgently invest in nursing education, jobs and leadership.’

Key topics discussed at the Conference include building an NP/APN workforce, COVID-19, inequality and underserved populations, education and competencies, policy and regulation, clinical practice, and technology and eHealth.

To register for the Conference, go to: <https://npapndublin2022.com/registration/>

In 2020, ICN published *Guidelines on Advanced Practice Nursing* to help develop policies, frameworks and strategies supportive of APNs. *Guidelines for Nurse Anesthetists* and *Guidelines on Prescriptive Authority for Nurses* were published in 2021.

ICN’s NP/APN Network helps to facilitate communication around common professional interests and expand the APN role. To learn more about the network and how to become a member, click [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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