

COP27 – lack of women at negotiations underlines depth of gender equality issue

Geneva, Switzerland; 18 November 2022 - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has added its voice to warnings that too few women are taking part in the COP27 climate negotiations, despite evidence that they bear a disproportionate burden from the effects of climate change. BBC analysis suggests that women make up less than 34% of country negotiating teams at COP27. ICN joins with other NGOs and campaigners who make the point that without greater female representation climate change cannot be tackled and as a result women's lives will become worse and the communities within which they work.

Out of 110 leaders present at COP27 only seven are women, and the Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) says this disproportionality is largely reflected in the delegation teams taking part in negotiations, with an average of less than 34% female and as high as 90% male in certain cases.

Some governments have also raised concerns about the lack of women members in the negotiations teams, arguing lack of women participating will affect the outcomes of the negotiations.

The BBC reports that Kathy Castor, chair of the US Select Committee on the Climate Crisis said that women's presence was vital: "It is absolutely fundamental to climate action that we educate young women and girls, but that means they must have a seat at the table at international conferences."

ICN President Pamela Cipriano said, "This lack of female participation is concerning and must be called out and addressed. The world's 28 million nurses are around 90% female and they know what it is to work in communities, care for people, and face the consequences of climate change which include both physical and mental health issues. They profoundly understand the effects of climate change from the ground up, and know the needed policy changes, but unfortunately because of gender prejudice unconscious or not, the depth of their leadership skills remains untapped.

ICN is addressing the gender inequality issue through its programmes, not least the Girl Child Education Fund (GCEF), and the nursing community has a strong presence at COP27 through its network both [virtually and onsite](#). However the lack of women at the COP27 negotiating table is both deeply troubling and symptomatic of a wider issue of too few women leaders in positions where they can directly help avert the climate calamity we are facing."

See summary of how ICN is addressing climate change and COP27 [here](#)

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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