



International Council of Nurses
The global voice of nursing

Press Information . Communiqué de presse . Comunicado de prensa

State of the World's Nursing Report – policy dialogue next steps: the COVID-19 factor

Geneva, Switzerland; 27 August 2020 - International Council of Nurses (ICN) Chief Executive Howard Catton took part in a virtual meeting with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other key partners, including National Nursing Associations, to discuss the next steps related to the [State of the World's Nursing Report](#) (SoWN). One of the key aims of the talks was to scope out how to take forward the strategic directions set out in that report and endorsed earlier this year at [the Triad meeting of Nursing and Midwifery leaders](#) in light of the impact of COVID-19.

Mr Catton said:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has identified fault-lines in health services in countries in every WHO region and the constant pressures that nurses are working under. The learnings from COVID will be invaluable to designing and building improved, sustainable and resilient healthcare systems for the future which at their heart must have a strengthened, valued and revitalised nursing workforce. The strategic directions in the SoWN report give us a roadmap not just for the future of nursing but for high quality, affordable and accessible health services that people everywhere need and deserve.

‘Nursing has been central to the response to COVID and that is where it must stay as we look to the future and imagine what the new normal can and must be.’

Yesterday's meeting included high-level representatives from WHO, led by WHO Chief Nursing Officer, Elizabeth Iro, and nursing leaders from National Nursing Associations in Lesotho, Ghana and Canada. They recognised the importance of starting a new dialogue with policymakers around the key findings of SoWN and the urgency of taking action now to begin shaping the post-COVID-19 world of healthcare.

The SoWN report highlights the central role of nurses in achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. It identifies key actions that need to be taken around the globe, including increasing funding to educate and recruit more nurses, developing nursing leadership, enabling nurses to work to the full scope of their practice, providing gender sensitive nursing policies and modernising professional self-regulation.

The Triad meeting [statement](#) identifies the need to use the data from the SoWN report to provide governments with a ‘roadmap for policy dialogue and evidence-informed investment’ in the professions.

Mr Catton said it was now vital to turn the report into action:

“The SoWN report provided vital data essential in any discussions about the future of nursing and midwifery. Today’s very fruitful talks are the start of a dialogue that will ensure that future policies capitalise on the benefits that nursing and midwifery can bring to communities all around the world.

‘Governments need to invest in nursing and address the workforce issues that are holding their countries back. And they must ensure that decisions about healthcare policies make things better for nurses, support them in their work, and allow them to perform to their highest potential whatever their field of expertise.

‘It’s telling, but not surprising, that WHO DG Dr Tedros, earlier this week, called for healthcare workers to be prioritized once a COVID-19 vaccine is available. It is due recognition that nurses are at the centre of creating working health-systems now and in the post-COVID world. We have a roadmap to realise that goal in the SOWN report and these policy dialogue initiatives piloted today will pave the way.’

+++

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, International Council of Nurses

madarasz@icn.ch

Tel: +41 22 908 01 16

www.icn.ch

[#ICNurses](https://twitter.com/ICNurses)