



Press Information . Communiqué de presse . Comunicado de prensa

ICN calls for urgent action to increase efforts to vaccinate healthcare workers in Africa as figures reveal that only one in ten are fully vaccinated

Geneva, Switzerland, 30 September 2021 – Data from nine countries in Africa have revealed that only 10% of healthcare workers are fully vaccinated. The data from Eswatini, Kenya, Comoros, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Niger and Senegal, also show that around one third of healthcare workers have had no vaccines at all, and approximately 55% have received one dose.

Nurses are the largest single professional healthcare group, and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) is concerned that they and their colleagues will continue to be at high risk from COVID-19 because of the slow, iniquitous and incomplete roll out of vaccines.

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said that although the data are not complete, they nevertheless indicate a serious situation that must be immediately addressed.

“This data supports reports we have had from our National Nurses Association members that this is a health and human rights crisis that requires urgent action right now. The slow and iniquitous progress in the delivery and roll out of vaccinations is putting our health, our healthcare systems and the wellbeing of our nurses at risk. Promises were made about putting healthcare staff at the front of the queue for vaccines, but nurses in Africa are still waiting. More nurses are going to get sick, their families are going to be at risk of harm and, tragically, more of them will die.

“This pandemic will only be over when it is over for everyone everywhere, which means it is in the self-interest of every nation and every person that the available vaccines are shared equitably, so that we can exit the pandemic and get our lives back to normal.

“The situation in Africa should be a red flag for the rest of the world. We already have a global nursing shortage that is going to get worse in coming years. Protecting our existing nursing staff is a crucial measure if we are going to maximise our ability to save lives and end the pandemic as soon as possible.

We have recently seen a billionaire take a healthcare worker on a journey into space. But back here on planet Earth we have millions of nurses waiting for a vaccine, they should not have to wish on a star for a vaccine. They should be prioritised, and it should be as of right that they receive that vaccine.”

* * *

Note to Editors

ICN's analysis is based on publicly available World Health Organization's [data](#)

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

www.icn.ch