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ICN says special meeting of WHO's Executive Board shows world is at a critical moment in the pandemic

Geneva, Switzerland, 07 October 2020 – A special virtual meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board on the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic reiterated that the world is at perilous point in the pandemic.

With more than one million deaths, 35 million-plus cases and the pandemic still in full flow, the WHO called on governments to provide strong leadership, clear and comprehensive strategies, consistent communication and to engage and empower their populations.

ICN made an intervention at the meeting about the importance of protecting healthcare workers, after which its Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said:

“At the meeting we heard many countries talk of rising numbers of cases, community transmission and health systems still under pressure. Frankly, it feels as though we are at an absolutely critical juncture: we still do not have control of the coronavirus, and that continues to put immense pressure on our healthcare workers.

‘The Executive Board acknowledged the important contribution of healthcare workers during the meeting, and ICN, in our intervention, reinforced the need to prioritise and protect all our healthcare workers.

‘A vaccine and exit strategy is still a long way off, and there are funding shortfalls. That’s why we must redouble and re-intensify our efforts to learn to live with this virus, which includes all of the things we can do as individuals - wash our hands, stay socially distanced and wear masks.

‘But we need whole government approaches as well, to test, track, trace and isolate: this is the only way that we can protect ourselves, our health systems, our economies and our vital healthcare workers.’”

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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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