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Southern European and Middle Eastern nursing associations ready to seize the opportunity of the Year of the Nurse and Midwife 2020

ICN and Southern European and Middle Eastern nursing associations representing more than a million nurses gather in Cyprus to share ideas for the Year of the Nurse and Midwife 2020

Geneva, Switzerland, 28 November 2019 –National nursing associations from across Southern Europe and the Middle East joined the International Council of Nurses (ICN) in Cyprus to finalise regional strategies and share ideas for maximising the impact of the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife 2020.

ICN President, Annette Kennedy, and ICN Board Member and President of the Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, Ioannis Leontiou opened the Policy Day, which brought together nurses' associations from Albania, Bahrain, Croatia, France, Israel, Italy, Malta, the United Arab Emirates, as well as host Cyprus, representing more than a million nurses.

In her opening remarks, President Kennedy said, "The Year of the Nurse and Midwife 2020 is a once in lifetime opportunity. We have one objective which is to improve the health of the population towards Universal Health Care and the only way to do that is by creating an environment for nurses that is fit for purpose, in terms of working conditions, education opportunities and leadership roles. We are raising the collective voice of our 20 million nurses worldwide to influence policy and change legislation, so that nurses can get the job done. We will make it happen."

President Leontiou, welcoming delegates from around the Southern European and Middle East regions, called for increased coordination between the nursing associations to make sure that nurses are heard by their governments and their leadership role reinforced, "We must work together to address all the major issues around nursing from leadership to nursing shortages. We are pleased to see so many countries represented at this meeting and know we will succeed in raising the profile of nurses during 2020 to achieve our goals."

The delegates heard from each of the national associations about their plans for the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, as well as the ICN Board members, who had been meeting earlier in the week in Cyprus.

ICN CEO, Howard Catton said he has been impressed by the variety and innovation of the ideas outlined by the delegates, "Every national association at the meeting has brought something new to the table and shared them with the associations, from innovative ways to influence policy to flash mobs, musical events or giant billboards displaying the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. This is

the spirit of the ICN, and why our organisation was founded 120 years ago, to advance nursing across borders and serve the population. We will take all of these great ideas on board and share them across our global network via similar meetings, social media and our website.”

In the afternoon of the Policy Day, delegates took part in workshops to discuss further ways to collaborate during the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and agreed that the specific areas below require specific focus:

- Increase investment in the nursing profession
- Influence policy development to ensure nurses have more leadership roles, education opportunities and a seat at the decision-making table
- Tackle workforce issues, including improving the nurse-to-patient ratio
- Collaborate on strategies towards reaching Universal Health Care & the United Nations SDGs
- Support and grow development of Advanced Practice Nurses

On Friday, ICN President Annette Kennedy will address the national conference of the Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association, “Nurses and Midwives for Health and Prosperity 24-7”, which will bring together more than 600 nurses.

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 at madarasz@icn.ch
Tel: +41 22 908 01 16

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