

## ***“Applause without action is no longer acceptable”***

### **ICN joins HRH Princess Muna al-Hussein in call to support nurses and other health workers**

**Geneva, Switzerland; 9 November 2020** – Princess Muna al-Hussein of Jordan has recognised the contribution of healthcare workers for their courage and relentless fight against COVID-19 and said that “applause without action is no longer acceptable.” ICN endorses her comments and calls for immediate action to safeguard the health and wellbeing of nurses and other healthcare workers.

Speaking at the opening of the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) today, the Princess called health workers “heroes” and recalled the WHA’s commitment to action during the Ebola crisis, saying,

“Now the COVID-19 pandemic is here and, once more dear friends, health workers are dying, but this time in their thousands, the majority of which are nurses.

‘We must invest in health workers. We must invest in educating and employing more health workers to ensure every mother, child, student, parent, and grandparent has access to safe health services. We must invest in fair pay and protection of health and care workers. We must invest in health workforce that would help the world recover.’”



ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said Princess Muna’s statement mirrors ICN’s concerns and underlines the need for strong global action now so that the rhetoric of recent months can be turned into tangible changes on the ground.

Annette Kennedy, ICN President, thanked Princess Muna for her phenomenal leadership and contribution for the past six decades and welcomed her powerful call to action.

“We stand shoulder to shoulder with Her Royal Highness and wholeheartedly support her call to governmental leaders to invest in health systems and health workers. This pandemic has exposed the fragility of health systems and the dire need for all countries to be more prepared.

‘It has also highlighted the role of nurses and other healthcare workers everywhere and, while the public show of support has been absolutely amazing, health workers need more than

applause and words to continue to provide vital care. ICN stands in solidarity with Princess Muna in her call to the WHA to commit to take action.”

Mr Catton added, “Princess Muna is absolutely right now is the time to act, not clap. We have been saying for months what needs to be done, in our [Call to Action](#), reports and regular updates, and it is deplorable that all the necessary action has not yet been taken. In short, governments need to collect and analyse the data of infections and deaths among nurses, recognise COVID-19 as an occupational disease, ensure personal protective equipment in all healthcare settings, have zero tolerance of discrimination and violence, increase nurses’ pay, invest in training and education, prioritise nurses for vaccinations, ensure mental health support, and increase the number and authority of nurse leaders.

‘After the pandemic, there will doubtless be inquiries and investigations into how it was handled. There are no excuses. ICN has shown clear actions on what must be done. The world is watching, and leaders must now act.”

Her Royal Highness Princess Muna al-Hussein is a long-time advocate of nursing, supporter of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the World Health Organization Patron of Nursing and Midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

During her opening speech at the virtual WHA, the Princess reminded delegates that health workers are continuing their fight against other health challenges: “Preventable diseases do not stop killing young children; mothers do not stop having babies; cancer continues to require treatment; our elders still require health and care services.”

She also stressed that once a vaccine is available, “we will be faced with a staggering task of vaccinating billions of people. No country will succeed without properly preparing their health system.”

Given that 70% of the world’s health workers are women, Her Royal Highness also raised the need for “investment in transformative, gender equity and rights policies”.

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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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