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His Holiness Pope Francis and U2's Bono send messages to nurses at the International Council of Nurses Congress

Largest ever virtual gathering of nurses ready to kick off on 2 November!

Geneva, Switzerland; 30 October 2021 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has received messages from His Holiness Pope Francis and Bono, Irish singer, songwriter and activist, in support of nurses across the globe. The messages will be shown at the Opening Ceremony of the [ICN virtual Congress](#), where around 5,000 nurses from 132 countries will meet virtually to discuss the challenges, opportunities and future of the nursing profession and healthcare.

ICN has received similar messages of support from other leading figures in politics, media and the arts, including Oprah Winfrey; Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison; and K-pop band SHINee.

The Congress, which runs for three days from 2-4 November, is being jointly hosted by ICN and the Emirates Nursing Association.

Congress will engage thousands of nurses in exploring responses to the pandemic, and ways in which nurses can work towards the achievement of universal healthcare, including by addressing the social determinants of health, such as education, gender equality, poverty and climate change.



Photo Credit: U2, Sao Paulo, 2017

The theme of this Congress, *Nursing Around the World*, will be used to pass the nursing baton across the different regions of the globe in a series of live and interactive events. Each one will give nurses the opportunity to showcase their expertise and innovative approaches to care. The virtual Congress will provide many opportunities for nurses to build relationships and disseminate best practice in nursing and health-related knowledge.

In addition to the traditional Parade of National Nursing Association Representatives, by video, there will be almost 1,000 plenary, main and concurrent sessions, and more than 1,200 posters on view. Delegates are able to watch the proceedings live and have online access to the whole programme for a further six months, enabling them to catch up with hundreds of sessions that may be of professional interest to them.

Participating speakers include World Health Organization Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; nurse advocate HRH Princess Muna al-Hussein of Jordan; former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, who chaired the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness; former Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon; High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet; International Labour Organization Director General Guy Ryder; UK Member of Parliament Jeremy Hunt; US senator and nurse Lauren Underwood; and Seychelles Minister for Health, nurse Peggy Vidot.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

“On behalf of the world’s nurses, I would like to thank His Holiness Pope Francis, Bono, Oprah and the many other well-known figures who have sent in their support to ICN and the nursing profession. The ICN Congress is always a great opportunity for nurses to meet their colleagues from all over the world and discuss the issues that matter most to them. While the pandemic has



forced us to change our format, we will ensure that everyone who attends virtually online gets the most possible out of it.

'These past two years have turned everyone's worlds upside down, but nurses and nursing have been a constant that people have been able to rely on, as always. Sadly, the selflessness of nurses has cost many of them their health, and more tragically, many have lost their lives. We will remember those from among us who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and work to build a better, safer future for nurses everywhere.'

'I am determined that this Congress will be good place to share the lessons COVID-19 has taught us, and to think seriously about what the future of our healthcare systems should look like. Nursing has a long and proud history, and the chapter that describes life in the time of COVID-19 will include lessons that will change the way healthcare is delivered and resonate down the years.'

For details of the Congress programme, click [here](#).

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Note for 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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