



## 71<sup>st</sup> WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Agenda item:

### **12.3 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030): early childhood development**

May 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the more than 20 million nurses worldwide.

Thank you for the report which addresses several issues for connected yet distinct population groups.

The health issues highlighted in the report are deeply rooted in the concept of health as a human right -the health of these groups can only be improved if human rights are upheld. Women and girls continue to experience multiple human rights violations related to issues such as abortion, family planning, female genital mutilation, sexual assault, sexuality, interpersonal violence and gender power imbalances. Nurses work to ensure that people are aware of their rights and empower them to demand that they be upheld.

Sexual and reproductive health often neglected as it occurs in a private sphere. Nurses build strong patient-provider professional relationships that allow us to enter this area of health and work to bring it forward as an important piece of overall health and wellbeing.

Highlighted in the Global Strategy, adolescents are central to the overall success of the 2030 Agenda. ICN urges countries to ensure that sexual health and sexual identity are addressed in adolescent health strategies as they are significant issues for this population. A lack of support with these issues can negatively affect mental health and wellbeing of this important population.

In designing policies and programmes, countries should apply a family-centred approach as parents are the main providers of nurturing care. Nurses are well-positioned to provide families with the knowledge, time and material resources needed for appropriate child care.

Unsafe abortion and associated morbidity and mortality in women are avoidable and governments should implement measure to improve access to safe abortion services to protect women and girls' health and human rights.

Thank you.

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