



71st WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Provisional agenda item:

20.1 Global vaccine action plan

May 2018

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

ICN believes that immunisation is a powerful tool in protecting health security. Vaccine-preventable infectious diseases can and have spread rapidly. With the challenges of climate change, migration, conflict and urbanisation, global health security is threatened. Immunisation not only prevents disability, illness, and death, it has a positive impact on social and economic development.

Health systems strengthening is essential in order to provide appropriate supplies and a workforce with a sufficient number of well-educated healthcare professionals in order to ensure safe and effective administration of vaccines and uninterrupted basic health interventions, which includes immunisation, and including during times of crisis.

Nurses are crucial in ensuring the success of vaccination programmes by enabling strategies such as integrating immunisation with other health services e.g. postnatal care for mothers and babies. Particular efforts are needed to reach unvaccinated and under-vaccinated populations and nurses are well-positioned to contribute to targeted approaches to improve coverage for displaced, mobile and neglected populations.

ICN urges Member States to ensure that laws, regulation and policies are in place that support the optimal use of the nursing workforce in their deliver of immunisation programmes. Nurses must be enabled to work to their full scope of practice in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of immunisation programmes. ICN is working to ensure that in all countries, professional nurses are educated and prepared to provide vaccines.

Furthermore, we encourage countries to incorporate a plan to measure and address vaccine hesitancy into national immunization programmes. Active involvement of nurses in planning and development of local, regional, and national immunisation strategies can help support these plans.

Thank you.

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