



SEVENTY-THIRD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Provisional agenda item 12

WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel

November 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of nurse supply flows, highlighted existing nurse supply gaps and the effect of staffing shortages at country level and has disrupted international nurse supply.

Large-scale international recruitment of nurses undermines the ability of low- and middle-income countries to cope with health emergencies and dangerously weakens health systems. High-income countries must train enough nurses to become self-sufficient and meet their own needs.

The global shortage of six million nurses, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 on the nursing workforce, will continue to increase the flow of nurses from low- to high-income countries and the iniquitous maldistribution of nurses may become more pronounced. As such, country-level nursing workforce policy change, guided by the Code and supported by international organisations, is important now more than ever.

Much of the coordinated action needed can be framed within a fuller implementation of the Code and ICN calls on Member States to do so. In addition to framing action using the Code, ICN's report on COVID-19 and the international supply of nurses puts forward policy options for effective post COVID-19 supply. Of these, ICN wishes to highlight the recommendation to implement a self-sufficiency indicator of level of percentage reliance on foreign trained nurses. This would give policy makers insight into the extent of dependence on international nurse supply and would also enable tracking and monitoring of the milestone commitment of the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health, that by 2030 all countries will have made progress towards having their dependency on foreign-trained health professionals and implementing the Code.

Lastly, ICN welcomes and commits to supporting the update of the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery. The Strategic Directions will be the road map to delivering the priorities identified in the State of the World's Nursing report, a landmark document co-chaired by ICN.