



## 73rd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific

Provisional agenda item 12

### Noncommunicable disease prevention and control

**October 2022**

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

ICN acknowledges the World Health Organization's draft Regional Action Framework for Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control in the Western Pacific. The Western Pacific bears a disproportionate burden from NCDs. WHO states that one quarter of global NCD deaths occurs in this Region, and the proportion of deaths due to NCDs is projected to increase further in the future.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for a time-bound promise to reduce, by one-third, premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing. For this to be achieved requires bold commitment and action, resourcing, and transformation of the health and social system.

ICN welcomes the strategy of increasing investment into NCD prevention and control; strengthening Primary Health Care (PHC) and the shift in focus from "absence of sickness" to "health and wellbeing." For this to be achieved requires a person-centred care approach. No longer should PHC be considered as independent physicians responding to acute episodes of care, working in isolation or in competition with other providers. Unleashing the potential of PHC requires changes to policies and funding models that encourage a coordinated and integrated multidisciplinary health care team focused on serving people. It also includes a paradigm shift in its focus on treatment to one that envisages health promotion and prevention whilst ensuring safe, quality care when people need it.

ICN strongly supports increasing health system capacity for NCDs through strengthening prevention and control of NCDs in PHC. However, across the world, there are critical medical and nursing workforce shortages in PHC. Overcoming these problems will require new models for the delivery of PHC, extensive use of digital tools and financing mechanisms that reward performance.

ICN and its members advocate for patients across the world, calling on Member States to:

- Commit to the actions outlined in the 'Time to Deliver: Report of the WHO Independent High-Level Commission on Noncommunicable diseases with special attention to "developing an adequate and well-equipped multi-disciplinary health workforce"
- Commit to developing regional and national action plans related to building and supporting the PHC health professional workforce which has the right skills, providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time
- Commit to workforce recruitment and education to improve allocative and technical efficiency
- Commit to better use of digital technology to improve coordination and efficiency of PHC services
- Where appropriate, shift services from hospitals to PHC and community settings



- Commit to integrated and team based PHC to deliver effective and comprehensive care
- Optimise the roles and responsibilities of nurses including developing and building the Advanced Practice Nursing workforce to improve access to PHC.

These recommendations will support the achievement of the targets set for NCDs in the SDGs. We look forward to working with you on this important programme.

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 nursing care for all and sound health policies globally.