



Year of the Nurse and Midwife webinar November 2019

Almost 200 nurses from around the world joined a Nursing Now-hosted webinar on the Year of the Nurse and Midwife

Geneva, 29 November 2019 - The webinar gave an overview of key events planned for 2020 and encouraged individual nurses and organisations to come up with their own ways to mark this special year-long celebration.

It was chaired by ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton, who said he hoped all nurses would use their New Year resolutions to commit to making the 2020 as effective as possible.

“I want nurses to make 2020 a fantastic year of celebration for our profession and create a step change in the way patients, the public, politicians and policymakers think of and see our profession. I want it to set up our profession with the support and investment that we need to enable us to deliver the global health challenges that we all face.”

World Health Organization Chief Nursing Officer Elizabeth Iro said the Year of the Nurse is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the profession.

“It’s a celebration and an opportunity to contribute and highlight what we can do for achieving universal health coverage and primary health care. It’s also an opportunity to reflect on and then move forward as to how best we can address the 18 million shortfall of health workers. We need to make the most of driving the investment case for nursing and midwifery.”

She said essential elements to communicate about next year are ensuring nurses have quality education and improved working conditions.

“We should also look to elevating our status and our leadership roles in support for women and girls. We need to convince government leaders that investments in our professions go a long way to achieving these global health targets for our countries and internationally.”

Ms Iro said investment in nursing students and young nurses, and developing nursing leadership, would position nursing as a growth industry that governments should invest in for the future through 2020 and beyond.

“I look forward to seeing what you do in your countries to take this forward and how we can amplify our messages from within our organisations.”

She said it will be important to measure success for 2020 and demonstrate exactly what had happened as a result of the campaign.

Howard Catton introduced Nursing Now Executive Director Barbara Stillwell and said she had been “an incredible driving force that had taken Nursing Now from an idea to something that is living in more than 100 countries.”

Dr Stillwell said 2020 marks an opportunity for nurses to work together and form networks that had not previously existed.

“We are united in showing the value of nursing, and I really so appreciate the collaboration of ICN, WHO and ICM, who have been wonderful in coming together to plan for next year. It’s

an opportunity that I hope will be mirrored at the country level, where we will see you working across traditional boundaries so that we can be united to showcase what nursing is all about, and why governments should be investing in it. We need to get the Year of the Nurse going with a huge bang and we need that to resonate around the world.”

She said a letter about the Year of the Nurse was going to be sent to all heads of state, politicians, policymakers and global religious leaders, asking them to show how they value nurses in their New Year messages and throughout next year.

Howard Catton said the hope is that the letter will be a catalyst that nurses will follow up by contacting their countries’ leaders and getting them to commit to supporting their nurses next year and beyond.

Dr Stillwell said any mentions of the Year of the Nurse by politicians and other leaders would be an opportunity for nurses to spread the message as widely as possible.

“We want you to get on social media and make it go viral. This is a big year: it’s the beginning of a new awareness of what nurses can contribute, and we want you to get that message out there, not only to politicians - they are critical because they have the money - but also to the public and others who may not be so involved in the campaign. Make sure everybody knows about 2020, and if you can, identify champions who can raise our profile, we are very keen to mobilise people who will be ambassadors for nursing.”

She said nurses could approach famous people who will be able to promote the Year of the Nurse with their fans and followers.

Dr Stillwell said the Nursing Now [Nightingale Challenge](#), which challenges employers to provide leadership training for 20,000 young nurses in 2020, has been a great success so far.

“The aim is to have 20,000 and we already have almost 14,500 nurses from 49 countries signed up. Let’s keep that going – we’d like to have them in every country, so keep spreading the word and encourage your employers to participate.”

She said the [State of the World’s Nursing report](#), which will be launched on 7 April, World Health Day, in Geneva, will for the first time show how many nurses there are in the world, where they are and where they are needed. “We want to raise the profile of the report as much as we can.”

Howard Catton said ICN and Nursing Now would be co-chairing the launch with WHO.

‘ICN will also be hosting a meeting for our National Nursing Associations in May for them to get to grips with the detail of the report.’

He said the last data for the report had been received and it was now being analysed before the report is drafted.

He added that there is a number of key dates in May 2020 to remember.

12 May is International Nurses Day and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, and 5 May is International Day of the Midwife.

ICN sets the theme for [International Nurses Day](#) and produces a report with resources for nurses around the world. The 2020 theme will be *Nurses: A Voice to Lead - Nursing the World to Health*. The report and resources will be released early in 2020.

Every two years, immediately before the World Health Assembly (WHA) there are meetings run by WHO, ICN and ICM for countries' chief nursing and midwifery officers, National Nursing and Midwifery Associations and regulators. The dates for these meetings in 2020 are 13-15 May.

Mr Catton said: 'We are looking to make this an even bigger event than usual. It will be a key moment where global nursing and midwifery leaders will come together to talk about 2020, but also to start to plan and prioritise what to take forward as a legacy from 2020 as well. Save the dates, watch out for the invitation, and for those of you working closely with governments, you should be asking your country delegations to the World Health Assembly this year about which nurses and midwives are going to be included in your country delegations.'

On 16 May there will be a meeting in Geneva on [health professions regulation](#), followed the next day by the start of the WHA.

"The World Health Assembly starts on 17 May and ICN, in collaboration with Nursing Now, will be organising our delegation of nurses from around the world who will be going to the assembly, maintaining the nursing and midwifery profile, and speaking on items on the WHA agenda."

Dr Stillwell said other important dates for next year include the [ICN Advanced Practice Nursing Network conference](#) in Halifax, Nova Scotia at the end of August, which will showcase what nurses can do if they work to the top of their license and have a legal framework that allows them to do that. That could be transformative for many countries, she said.

In October, there will be a lobby of parliamentarians using the evidence from the *State of the World's Nursing* report and questions that came out of it.

Dr Stillwell said. "We are going to ask you to go to your parliament to meet your representatives and ministers and do something very noticeable – go at the same time of day so that it rolls around the world. Get ready for that, get involved, make sure you know what the data is and what it is showing about your country, and prepare your own manifesto about what you want to happen in your country that you can present to your parliament."

She said that from October she wants the focus to be moved on from 2020 itself to what happens next, what nurses can and could do with the right support.

Mr Catton said ICN will be launching guidance on advanced nursing practice and an update briefing about the state of nursing leadership around the world next year.

The final big international event of the Year of the Nurse celebrations will be the [Nightingale 2020](#) conference, which will be held in London towards the end of October.

Three country representatives contributed to the webinar to illustrate what others could do to mark 2020.

Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for England Hilary Garratt said she wanted to encourage every nurse to speak to their members of parliament and would be providing them with a toolkit to help guide their conversations with their local politicians.

"We want our MPs to understand the breadth of nursing, the impact of nursing and the importance of nursing. We are having conversations with celebrities – there's no shortage of celebrities wanting to work with us, shadow us, talk to us on TV. And we are talking to religious leaders about religious and cultural celebrations up and down the country.

'What is important for us is to really unite the profession through a partnership group, Team Chief Nursing Officer, that brings together all organisations that represent nurses, from educational institutions, the military, social and primary care etc.'

She said all local, regional, national and international activities to do with 2020 are being represented on a calendar held on the [Florence Nightingale Museum website](#) that can be accessed by any nurse to see how their plans fit in to the plans of others.

In England, there will be a National Nurses' Marathon in October, that will see nurses and midwives run the length and breadth of the country carrying a lamp that they will pass from runner to runner. The plan is to get the public and politicians to run with the nurses so nurses can tell their stories as they run.

There will also be a National Tea Party in June, where nurses will invite the public, policy influencers, celebrities and patients to have a cup of tea.

The evening of May 12 will also see civic buildings in England lit up in blue to say thank you to a nurse or midwife.

Nursing Now coordinator in Nigeria Josiah Jackson spoke about the plans in his country. He said there was a good deal of misperception about what nurses do, and the inaccurate image of the profession in his country needs to be corrected.

'Nursing Now in Nigeria is trying to work with national nursing leaders to build an agenda centred around understanding the value and worth of nurses in our country. We are planning a media kick-off in January to announce 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and pass on a message about the value nurses bring to the country and the healthcare industry as indispensable healthcare professionals who can transform the health of families and communities.'

'We feel that whatever celebration we have in 2020 it would not make any sense if we did not address this nagging problem [about the image of nursing], so that beyond 2020 people will pay attention to nurses and see the opportunity to explore the full potential of the profession. We want people, especially the government and lawmakers, to begin to listen to nurses and bring them into plans for reviving the healthcare system in Nigeria.'

Mr Jackson said there are also plans to use the media to put senior nurses before the public so they can see who is driving the profession and what the impact of good nursing care is.

Korean Nurses Association's Chief Manager of the International Cooperation Department Dr Seung Jin Oh said activities marking the Year of the Nurse had already started in Korea.

Last month, more than 50,000 Korean nurses and 80 key policymakers participated in a rally to launch the Year of the Nurse in Korea.

The Korean Nurses Association has called for government and legislators to improve the working conditions and environment of nurses who are devoting their lives to improving the health of the population.

'We plan to hold a special event to celebrate International Nurses Day in May. It will include a ceremony to mark the day and a conference with lectures from nurse leaders, and a careers fair. We plan to carry our campaign about awareness of nurses through diverse media platforms. Lastly, we plan to hold multiple forums inviting nurses from here and overseas.'

Dr Seung Jin Oh also said there are plans to disseminate information about Korea's nursing history and the work of the two Austrian nurses, [Marianne and Margaritha](#), who worked

unpaid in Korea for 40 years looking after people who had Leprosy. Marianne and Margarita have been nominated for next year's Nobel Peace Prize by an influential committee from Korea that includes the Korean Nurses Association.

Mr Catton said the branding and logo for 2020 will be published shortly and the social media the hashtag will be #Nurses2020

He ended the webinar saying: "Let's keep the conversation going. Let's aim to get #Nurses2020 trending for as many days as we possibly can next year. As Barbara said, this is a once in a generation opportunity, but we are the generation that carries that responsibility. Let's carry it together. It's our time, it's our year."

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