

## **Fijian Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, pays tribute to nurses**

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### ***Western Pacific Nurses call for sustainable healthcare and highlight threat of NCDs in the region at ICN Congress***

**Geneva, Switzerland, 4 November 2021** – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) Congress theme is “Nursing Around the World” and, along with the variety of international speakers, the theme is also reflected in the regional sessions which are being held each day.

Today, the voyage around the world visited the Western Pacific with a series of videos and interviews from nurse leaders across the region.

The session, which was moderated by ICN’s third Vice President Sung Rae Shin from the Korean Nurses Association, featured the Fijian Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, who expressed his nation’s gratitude to nurses and to the ICN Congress.

“No one knows better than you, the professional nurses, how this virus has upended our lives. In every country on this planet, we are in debt to you for the sacrifices you have been making for nearly two years to defend human life. Yours is a profession of service, and we are all seeing that service goes beyond providing care, it means carrying the hopes of the human race on your shoulders.



“Nurses in Fiji have been putting in the hard yards since our first COVID case was detected in March last year. Their mission has taken them away from their families, exposed them to serious risk, but they have never flinched. They have done everything that the profession demanded of them and much more. Even trekking across mountains and travelling across oceans and rivers targeting hard to reach populations. They and other colleagues on the frontlines have been our national heroes.”

The regional session began with a presentation on “Mobilising our resources” by Xinjuan Wu, President of the Chinese Nursing Association, who proposed that NNAs should actively lobby governments to increase health investment, invest in nursing education, create safe working environments and strengthen nurses’ rights through regulation.

The Honourable Minister of Health for the Kingdom of Tonga, Associate Professor Amelia Afuha’amango Tuipulotu, spoke about the effects of the pandemic and proposed three sustainable solutions:

“First, scope of practice must reflect the full extent of nursing and midwifery education...Secondly, young potential future leaders must be prepared now, as they must have the key competencies in order to successfully work in partnership and influence current, traditional dominant powers in health care, to enhance long term investment in nursing

education and practice. Finally, I wish to call upon all the nurses and midwives of the Pacific and the world to lead and model and act now to reduce the projected dangerous trend in NCDs into the future.”

Jain Ko, Nursing Deputy Director of Korean Ministry of Health and Christopher O’Donnell, from the Australian College of Nursing, also spoke about the situation of nurses in their countries and the need for investment.

Case studies from the Philippines, Japan, Vanuatu, China, Australia and other countries further enriched this session.

ICN’s 2021 Congress is taking place virtually on 2-4 November. For more information and to register go to: <https://icncongress2021.org/>

To access recordings of the Western Pacific Regional session, and the rest of ICN Congress go to: <https://congress2021.icnevents.online/>.

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