



Open Letter to G7 Leaders

2 June 2021

Dear Leaders of the G7,

I am writing to you today, on behalf of the world's nurses, to call on you to make a momentous decision that could ultimately save millions of lives and change countless millions of others.

The world is in a precarious place with a raging pandemic mutating out of control in many countries, while others contemplate returning to the pre-pandemic lives we all crave.

The world needs your leadership now, perhaps more than ever, over the vexed question of the continuing supply of registered nurses, whose worth has been so clearly demonstrated during the terrible months since the start of the pandemic. Nurses make up 59% of the health workforce and health systems cannot function without an investment in nursing and nurses.

The world went into the pandemic with a shortage of six million nurses worldwide, and we now know that a further four million are likely to retire over the next decade. These ten million nurses will have to be replaced, and we still do not know what the toll of the pandemic will be in terms of nurses leaving the profession prematurely over the next few years.

At last month's World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting, the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021-2025 was adopted, with the intention of strengthening nursing and midwifery through investment in education, jobs, leadership and service delivery. The WHA also adopted its Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health 2030, which is intended to protect, safeguard and invest in the health and care workforce.

But also at that meeting, World Health Organization Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus revealed that at least 115,000 health and care workers have died as a result of contracting COVID-19. That is the equivalent of 200 skilled and dedicated healthcare workers dying every day since the start of the pandemic. Dr Tedros said it was scandalous, and I agree: it is a disgrace. But the International Council of Nurses believes you have the solution in your hands.

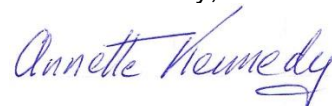
We are calling on you to create a Global Pandemic Treaty that will better prepare and strengthen all the world's healthcare systems, and put the protection of nurses and other healthcare workers at its heart.

The way out of the current and predicted nurse shortages is through massive investment in nursing jobs, education, leadership and practice. Long-term global workforce planning would see the end of the boom-and-bust cycles of the past and put the profession on an even keel toward a more stable and healthy future for us all.

We can't change the past, but we do not have to repeat it. To honour those nurses who lost their lives while courageously caring for others, now is the time for you to make a real difference. The world's nurses are calling on you to make the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery a priority, so that we can create a better, safer, healthier and more economically stable future for us all.

Please, do the right thing now, before it is too late.

Yours sincerely,



Annette Kennedy
President
International Council of Nurses