

International Council of Nurses and Nursing Now welcome 2020 as International Year of the Nurse and Midwife



Geneva, Switzerland; 24 May 2019 – 2020 will be the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, it was announced today at the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva.

For the first time in history, the nations of the world will unite in celebration of the benefits that nursing and midwifery bring to the health of the global population.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) said:

“WHO is proud to nominate 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. These two health professions are invaluable to the health of people everywhere.

‘Without nurses and midwives, we will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals or

universal health coverage.

'While WHO recognises their crucial role on a daily basis, 2020 will be dedicated to highlighting the enormous sacrifices and contributions of nurses and midwives, and to ensuring that we address the shortage of these vital professions.

'I would like to thank the International Council of Nurses and the Nursing Now campaign for raising the status and profile of nurses and am proud to contribute to the recognition of their work.'

ICN and the Nursing Now campaign believe that 2020's designation will reveal the benefits of having a properly trained and resourced nursing workforce in every country in the world.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said:

"The 20 million nurses around the world will be thrilled to see their profession recognised in this way. I would like to congratulate WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for his farsightedness and wisdom in seeing the benefit of highlighting the contribution of nurses to healthcare, and the WHA members for making his vision become a reality.

She said the designation of 2020 was especially welcome as it coincides with the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, one of the founders of modern nursing.

"Florence Nightingale used her lamp to illuminate the places where nurses worked, and I hope the designation of 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife will provide us with a new, 20-20 vision of what nursing is in the modern era, and how nurses can light the way to universal health coverage and healthcare for all."

Lord Nigel Crisp, co-Chair of the Nursing Now campaign said:

"The WHO has provided a unique opportunity both for countries to demonstrate how much they appreciate their nurses and midwives and to showcase what more nurses and midwives can achieve if given the support to do so.

'Investing in nursing and midwifery will make an enormous contribution to the rapid, cost-effective and high quality scaling up of universal health care.

'This is a once in a generation opportunity for governments to really show nurses and midwives how much they are valued, not by empty words, but by effective, decisive action to give us the human and physical resources needed to get the job done.'

Nursing Now has launched the Nightingale Challenge 2020, which calls for every employer of nurses globally to provide leadership and development training for 20 young nurses and midwives next year. The aim is to have at least 20,000 young nurses and midwives benefiting from this in 2020. The Nightingale Challenge will be launched at the ICN Congress in Singapore in June 2019. Join us there to hear more about this exciting initiative and to help us plan for 2020. Register [here](#).

ICN recently hosted a Pre-World Health Assembly event, organised by Nursing Now and supported by the WISH Foundation and the Sigma Nursing, to start the process of training young nurses to be leaders in and beyond their profession.

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Note to Editors

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 care for all and sound health policies globally.

Nursing Now is a three-year global campaign run in collaboration with the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization. It is based on the findings of the [Triple Impact](#) report, which concluded that as well as improving health globally, empowering nurses would contribute to improved gender equality – as the vast majority of nurses are still women – and build stronger economies.

The **World Health Assembly** is the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, which determines its policies, appoints its Director General and approves and oversees its budget.

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