



Communiqué

International Council of Nurses 2019 International Workforce Forum Beirut, Lebanon, 12-13 February 2019

Leaders from five national nurses' associations met in Beirut to discuss the global shortage of nurses. The forum, hosted by the Lebanon Order of Nurses, was attended by representatives from Canada, Denmark, Japan and Sweden. Nurses from Ireland did not attend because of ongoing industrial action.

The key message from the forum is that the global shortage of nurses demands urgent action from governments.

Discussions focused on how to meet the world's health priorities despite alarming predictions of a shortfall of 18 million healthcare professionals worldwide by 2030, 50% of whom will be nurses.

Reports from the participating countries showed common themes affecting nurses around the world, including:

- Staff shortages
- Poor working conditions
- Increased violence in the workplace
- Mandatory overtime
- Problems with recruitment and retention
- Unfair, unequal and inadequate remuneration

One indication of the stress that nursing workforces are under is the proportion of nurses who have declared an intention to leave the profession. In Lebanon, 38% of the current nursing workforce intends to leave, and other countries' figures are similar or worse.

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) has reported that there are 20.7 million nurses and midwives worldwide, and that nurses form a significant proportion of the migrant community. The migration of nurses is vital to combatting workforce challenges internationally, and a change to a more positive narrative around migrant nurses will help shape the view of migration generally. The forum urged countries to adhere to the WHO Code of Practice on International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

The forum discussed the health and rights of refugees, and the urgent need for appropriate human resource planning to ensure there are adequate nursing staff in receiving countries.



The forum discussed various challenges confronting healthcare systems, including the ageing population and the impact of artificial intelligence on health and wellbeing. The goal of universal health coverage will only be achieved with adequate numbers of nurses, including nurses practicing at an advanced level.

We recognised the need to develop progressive policies to help meet expectations of younger nurses to encourage them to stay in the profession.

We renewed our call on nurse leaders, trade unions and professional organisations to campaign for the use of tools, systems and processes that achieve a better, safer future for patients and the nurses who care for them.

The forum welcomed the decision of World Health Organization Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to designate 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife. We believe the Year of the Nurse and Midwife should have a positive impact on the retention and recruitment of the nursing workforce worldwide.

We were inspired by the 2018 Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care, which called for a decent work environment for all healthcare workers. Forum members will continue to put pressure on their respective governments to honour the declaration.

At the forum the Order of Nurses in Lebanon launched the Nursing Now campaign.

Further information

The WHO 2018 Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care can be viewed here:

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/primary-health/declaration/qcphc-declaration.pdf>

Nursing Now campaign here: <https://www.nursingnow.org/>