

International Council of Nurses

President Pamela Cipriano



International Women's Day statement

Published 8 March 2022

International Women's Day (IWD) is a great opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women everywhere, especially the women who make up 90% of the nursing workforce.

But it is also a day to focus on the reality of women's position in the world and the many challenges they face. Until women and men are considered equal everywhere, women and girls will suffer from the bias that can blight their lives and their opportunities to achieve their full potential.

The IWD campaign website calls on everyone to #BreakTheBias, and that's what we should all strive to do and level the playing field.

The United Nations (UN) theme for the day this year is Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow, focusing on climate change and how women and girls are more severely affected by it than men and at the same time are powerful change-makers leading sustainability initiatives around the world.

ICN's Position Statement on Climate change recognises it is the single largest threat to global development, and has the potential to undermine many of the health gains we have achieved in the past 50 years.

The changing climate has created many humanitarian disasters and will no doubt cause many more. In such situations, women suffer more than men, just as they do in all humanitarian crises, including wars, such as the one currently being waged in Ukraine. The eyes of the world are rightly focused on what is happening in Ukraine and we stand in solidarity with the people of that country, and with the nurses and other healthcare workers whose lives are threatened by this unlawful and appalling invasion.

But while the world looks towards Ukraine, we must remember that the world's nurses are still fighting the pandemic which is far from over, and doing all they can to bring it to an end. That will only happen when everyone everywhere has an opportunity to be vaccinated, and we continue to urge world leaders to do everything they can to make vaccine equity a reality, especially in developing countries where many people have still not received a single dose.

None of us will be truly safe from COVID-19 until we all are. Nurses can make their contribution, but they cannot do it alone. Only when we have equality will we truly be able to create a sustainable, healthy and fair world, and that is why I ask everyone of you to #BreakTheBias, not just today but every day.