



146<sup>th</sup> WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD

February 2020

Provisional agenda item 7.2

**Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the over 20 million nurses worldwide.

Our President, Annette Kennedy, was a member of the Independent High-level Commission on NCDs. The Commission report highlights the vital role of nurses in health promotion, health literacy, and in the prevention and management of NCDs. Nurses are often the first, and may be the only, healthcare professional in patient contact and are crucial to the early detection and diagnosis of NCDs. Nurses provide evidence-based health promotion and NCD management encompassing counselling, health education, early intervention and motivational techniques for behaviour change. The work of nurses in collaboration with others and in supervision of paraprofessional community workers should be central to NCD strategies. Countries that ensure an adequate, well-educated and well-resourced nursing workforce will strengthen their capacity to prevent catastrophic health expenditures and premature deaths.

ICN welcomes the strong emphasis on mental health promotion in the NCD agenda and fully supports the menu of policy options and mental health interventions. We do, however, urge WHO and governments to scale up and expand the menu with interventions for a wide range of conditions and comorbidities across the lifespan and that address social determinants of mental health.

ICN strongly supports the shift from in-hospital mental health services to community-based care. Nurses are essential in promoting the resilience of individuals, families and communities in non-specialised health settings, providing chronic illness education for self-care and reducing symptoms in persons at risk for and experiencing mental illness. They have expertise in incorporating mental health interventions into the holistic, person-centred care that they deliver, broadening therapeutic outcomes for complex components of chronic illness. There is a pressing need to fully mobilise the expertise of nurses to deliver integrated physical and mental health care to all.

Thank you.