

#WHA77



**ICN**  
International  
Council of Nurses

*The global voice of nursing*

## The 77th World Health Assembly in Geneva 27 May – 2 June 2024 ICN Highlights

### INTRODUCTION

A 70-strong ICN delegation of National Nurses Association representatives, ICN Board members and staff and nurses from all over the world attended the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting in Geneva.

The delegation, with some members attending in person and others online, monitored the Assembly's decisions and witnessed ICN staff delivering statements on vital current health care issues.

The WHA was also an occasion for nurses from around the globe to meet and hold formal and informal meetings.

[WHO's Director General, Dr Tedros, opening address on 27 May](#)



### UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

ICN delivered an [statement](#) on Item 11.1 – Universal Health Coverage, which urged Member States to optimize and increase investments in education, employment and retention of the nursing workforce to achieve UHC. On closing the session on UHC and the follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCD, WHO Assistant Director General Bruce Aylward thanked ICN specifically for our contribution on this.

WHA passed the first-ever resolution on [Social participation for universal health coverage, health and well-being](#). The resolution aims to tackle health inequities and the erosion of trust in health systems, which is crucial in the face of the unprecedented challenges the world is facing such as climate change, conflicts, and pandemic threats.

ICN President, Dr Cipriano, who is co-chair of UHC2030, attended a UHC2030/WHA event, and spoke at the meeting titled 'Leveraging Patient Organizations as Key Partners in Delivery of UHC with the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations'. Participants discussed how to move the agenda of the patients' association forward.

ICN Senior Advisor, Nursing & Health Policy, Erica Burton joined a round table event (pictured right) launching the All for Health, Health for All: the WHO Investment Case, 2025-2028. The Strategic Roundtable event brought together delegates, experts from WHO, partner agencies and civil society to discuss WHO's finances. The discussion focused on the need for a sustainably financed WHO and incorporated the launch of investment case, which will underpin WHO's first ever Investment Round.



## PANDEMIC PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

ICN delivered a [constituency statement](#) on Item 13.4: Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The statement was made on behalf of FDI World Dental Federation, FIP International Pharmaceutical Federation, ICN, WMA World Medical Association, World Physiotherapy, and The International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP).

On the final day of the WHA, Member States agreed on a package of critical amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR), and made concrete commitments to completing negotiations on a global pandemic agreement within a year, at the latest. These critical actions have been taken in order to ensure comprehensive, robust systems are in place in all countries to protect the health and safety of all people everywhere from the risk of future outbreaks and pandemics.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

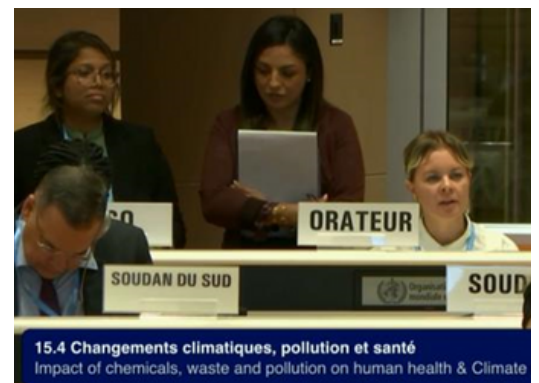
Ms Burton (right) delivered a statement on Item 15.4 [Climate change, pollution and health](#) which called on governments to look to nursing associations and nurse leaders, educators and scientists who are leading large scale climate initiatives.

WHA passed a landmark [resolution](#) recognizing climate change as an imminent threat to global health, passing a resolution which underscores the urgent need for decisive measures to confront the profound health risks posed by climate change.

The resolution, supported overwhelmingly by Member States, presents an overview of the existential threat that climate change poses to human health. The Health Assembly asserts that radical action is imperative to safeguard the health of the planet, underscoring the interdependence of environmental sustainability and public health.

Global health leaders and experts convened for a Strategic [Roundtable](#) meeting to address the critical intersection of climate change and health. This event, held in anticipation of COP 29 and as part of the World Health Assembly, aimed to bolster momentum and shape the global health architecture for tackling climate change. Keynote speakers emphasized the urgency of the issue and the necessity for collaborative action to mitigate the health impacts of climate change and promote health mitigation policies in other sectors.

The Strategic Roundtable built momentum from COP28 towards COP29 to shape the global health architecture for addressing climate change.



This roundtable has particular significance given that the climate and health resolution was adopted at the WHA and that climate change is the focus of one of the six strategic objectives of WHO's GPW14. Discussions will also facilitate coordination and collaboration and outline relevant initiatives. Watch the roundtable event [here](#).

ICN CEO Mr Howard Catton attended the global Climate and Health Alliance meeting of the signatories to the [Fossil Fuel Phase Out letter](#). He also attended a side event hosted by the Frontline Health Workers Coalition entitled Innovate, Invest, Empower & Protect: Shaping the Future of Health Workforce, which included a Panel discussions on best practices, locally led solutions, and partnerships that help create an enabling environment for health workers.

ICN Head of Partnerships and Programmes Development Karine Lavoie attended the Climate and Health Finance Dialogue and Reception (pictured right), co-hosted by Amref Health Africa and Foundation under the COP28 Presidency, The Green Climate Fund, The Rockefeller Foundation, WHO, and the Global Fund in partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative. Discussions showed the need for a bridge between health care and the environment, as well as the necessary agility to address funding needed to really address the problem and actual disaster preparedness.



## ECONOMICS OF HEALTH FOR ALL

WHA passed a [new resolution](#) supporting countries to restructure their economies to serve the health of people and the planet.

The new resolution takes forward the recommendations of the [WHO Council on the Economics of Health](#) for All. It highlights that healthy populations and a thriving planet are prerequisites for sustainable development. The state of health and well-being is a reflection of how people live, what they eat, how they learn and work, and whether all people, at all ages, are able to get the healthcare they need without becoming impoverished.

The resolution sets out a way forward for Member States, international and regional financial institutions, and other stakeholders to better align actions across economic, social and environmental dimensions, with a clear focus on health for all.

Through this resolution, the Health Assembly mandated WHO to develop a strategy on economics and financing for health by 2026, to guide countries in advancing this bold new vision of economies built around health and well-being.

ICN delivered a [statement](#) on this topic recommending that governments treat health workers as a long-term investment not a short-term cost. It urges countries to rebuild and strengthen health systems and economies because strategic investment in nursing is a pivotal pathway to achieving sustained growth and resilience.

## MATERNAL AND CHILD MORTALITY

Item 11.7 [Acceleration towards the SDG targets for maternal health and child mortality](#). ICN delivered a [statement](#) on this topic encouraging stakeholders to collaborate with ICN and nurses on this important agenda, which is central to nursing practice.

Hosted by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and co-hosted by the Governments of India and Norway, UNICEF and UNFPA, *Invest in What Matters: Making the Case for Women's, Children's and Adolescent Health and Well-Being* aimed at disseminating emerging evidence and findings and discussed key opportunities for increasing investment in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and well-being to accelerate progress towards the 2030 goals. ICN delegate, Felicia Kwaku, Associate Director of Nursing/Senior Head of Nursing for Acute Specialty medicine at Kings Hospital and a GNLI alumna, attended this event. Watch the recording [here](#).

ICN Senior Policy Advisor Erica Burton attended the Implementing Midwifery Models of Care to Improve Maternal and Newborn Outcomes: A Country Roundtable Discussion, co-hosted by UNFPA and the UK, in partnership with ICM.

## NURSING WORKFORCE

Mr Catton attended the Medicus Mundi meeting entitled *Towards a Global Code of Practice that promotes the rights of the health and care workforce*, where Perpetual Ofori-Ampofo, President of the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association, was speaking. The meeting examined the [WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel](#), which the organizing team wants to become a strong, relevant and effective instrument, and the realities of health workers in countries with health and care worker shortages.

Mr Catton joined the Promoting a sustainable and equitable global health workforce, co-hosted by the Tropical Health and Education Trust and the Philippines Government. The meeting focused on addressing the global shortage of health workers, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions covered strategic directions for equitable health worker migration, sustainable management, and the strengthening of health systems in the face of ageing demographics and ongoing workforce vacancies worldwide.

## GLOBAL HEALTH AND PEACE

ICN also delivered a [statement](#) on WHO's Health and Peace Initiative, condemning violence against health care workers, and describing how ICN's [#nursesforpeace campaign](#) has identified and promoted nursing roles that directly contribute to peace building.

## ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

Making 2024 a watershed year for worldwide equitable action on antimicrobial resistance, Member States, Members of the [Global Leaders Group on AMR \(GLG\)](#), partners, youth leaders and survivor advocates came together at a Strategic Roundtable meeting to [chart a new path forward for global action against antimicrobial resistance](#).

2024 is a crucial year for AMR, with the [2nd United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting \(HLM\) on AMR](#) in New York, USA on 26 September 2024 and other major opportunities, including the 4th Ministerial Meeting from 15-16 November 2024 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Erica Burton, attended the World Medical Association and Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Development Hub meeting, titled 'AMR, Looking Towards the UN General Assembly and Beyond'.

The event hosted roundtable discussions on 1) access and innovation; 2) health systems and health workforce; 3) stewardship; 4) One Health, to identify urgent opportunities for collective action towards the UN HLM on AMR political declaration draft and to explore areas of mutual interest for collaboration beyond the United Nations General Assembly.

## WELLBEING THROUGH SPORT

WHO Member States approved a new resolution (initiated by Qatar) on [strengthening health and wellbeing through sporting events](#).

## ICN NURSE DELEGATES LUNCHEON

ICN held a special luncheon on 29 May for all nurses attending the WHA in person, and virtually. The luncheon was also attended by representatives of NNAs and other dignitaries, including WHO Chief Nursing Officer Dr Amelia Tuipulotu, ministers of health, the International Labour Organisation and staff from BBC StoryWorks, who have begun work on the second series of the ICN [Caring with Courage](#) series.

The ICN CEO (pictured right) welcomed guests to the luncheon and spoke about how far nursing had come since the early days of WHO. Mr Catton emphasized the critical role nurses now have in health care delivery, and how the nursing profession is often centre stage in the policy-making discussions at the WHA.



Dr Cipriano (left) spoke of the importance of the luncheon in providing a unique opportunity for nurses from around the world to get together at an important policy-making event, and it enabled ICN to talk about some of its latest work, including with WHO. Dr Cipriano said: “We’re very honoured to have some ministers with us, and also other high-level officials who support what we do, and whom we want to lobby to do more with us and for us. We all know that investing in nursing and midwifery has enormous effects on the wellbeing of populations. And so we want to continue to spread these messages. It’s helpful for gender equality. It’s also important for social cohesion, and peace and prosperity in our communities.”

She directed participants to look at ICN’s 2024 IND [report](#) on the economic power of care to help broaden those messages. She called for support in addressing climate change, highlighted the resilience of nurses in Ukraine, and spoke about the need to provide essential materials and mental health assistance to the people of Palestine and Israel.

WHO Chief Nursing Officer Amelia Tuipulotu (pictured right) applauded nurses for delivering care globally and acknowledged ICN’s partnerships with WHO. She also emphasized the importance of investing in nursing and midwifery for a healthier society. Dr Tuipulotu said: “It is amazing that we come together. And I was thinking about the 29 million nurses and more than two million midwives delivering care every day everywhere around the world, and doing their best within sometimes very challenging working conditions. I would like to applaud the nurses delivering care at the frontlines in communities and in hospitals everywhere.”



## ICN SIDE MEETINGS

The ICN President and the CEO met with Singaporean Chief Nursing Officer Paulin Koh (pictured right). They discussed nursing leadership, the development of Advanced Practice Nurses and other significant topics, including the future of the profession.



Dr Cipriano also met with the Indonesian Minister of Health Budi G Sadikin.

Dr Cipriano met with the Taiwanese Minister of Health to discuss the future of holistic care and wellbeing; and Dr Cipriano and Mr Catton met the Chief Nurse of Tonga, Mele inu Filise (pictured right).



The ICN President and CEO also held meetings with Dr Leigh Chapman, CNO for Canada and Madeleine Ballard, CEO and Co-Founder of the Community Health Impact Coalition (CHIC), to explore areas of common interest and potential collaboration.



ICN CEO Howard Catton had a meeting with Lawal-Aiyedun Olubunmi Remilekun, Chair of Nursing and Midwifery Working Group of the G4 Alliance (pictured left).

Mr Catton spoke at a World Health Professions Alliance workforce event about noncommunicable diseases and workforce dynamics and what needs to be done to empower health professionals to tackle the problem.

Mr Catton held a private meeting on migration at ICN Headquarters, co-hosted by THET: Partnerships for Global Health (pictured right).



ICN Senior Policy Advisor, Hoi Shan Fokeladeh attended a side event hosted by Women in Global Health and the University of Utah on “The urgent need to support health workers’ well-being and resiliency: From awareness to action. The event aimed to address the looming crisis by getting together a mixed group of government leaders, academic institutions, and INGOs to explore progress, gaps and the way forward. The discussion focused on the indications of policy change and development to address healthcare worker wellbeing and specifically the gender imbalances.

Hoi Shan Fokeladeh attended the Global Launch of the Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index 2nd Wave, by the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC). The [Healthy Ageing and Prevention Index](#) is an online tool created by ILC that ranks countries on six metrics including, life span, health span, work span, income, environmental performance, and happiness. The Index helps us understand how well countries have adapted to longevity and inform decision makers on what must be done to maximise the economic benefits that come with living well for longer. The panel discussion gathered Ministers of Health, research centres and global health leaders to provide insight into the ageing population and what needs to be done to keep populations healthier for longer.

Karine Lavoie attended the Multistakeholder Dialogue on the 2030 Global Agenda for Sepsis (GSA). The global sepsis alliance, represents Africa, APAC, EMRO and Europe in coordination with the Latin American Sepsis institute. Based on the situation and gap analysis of the global sepsis response, as the way forward, the GSA is proposing to structure the 2030 Global agenda for sepsis around the following five strategic pillars:

- Political leadership and multilateral cooperation
- Health systems readiness for sepsis and its sequelae
- Whole of society response to sepsis
- Sepsis research and innovation
- Sepsis in pandemics and other emergencies.

ICN reiterated its intent to be at the table and design this framework with the Global Sepsis Alliance.

ICN Director of Communications and Events Richard Elliott attended the First Global Self-Care Summit: Self-Care in Action Empowering Health and Well-Being held by United for Self-Care. Judy Stenmark, DG Global Self-Care Federation, spoke about the importance of self-care linked to achieving UHC goals. Keynote speaker and host of event, Lucy Mkutumula, Malawi Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services, Ministry of Health addressed the need to place people at centre of health care and gave an example of self-testing for HIV.

A high-level panel (pictured right) included Dr Manjulaa Narasimhan Unit Head of dept of sexual and reproductive health and research WHO; Prof Iain Chapple Head of Research Institute Clinical Studies University of Birmingham; and Wendy Olayiwola President of Nigerian Nurses Association UK. Dr Tedros gave a video message in support of Self-Care as complimentary to support our health care systems reaching UHC. The Coalition's goal is to include self-care as a critical component of health care as part of achieving UHC. ICN supports Self-Care as part of a properly invested health care system. Nurses are advocates for self-care because they have the knowledge to share with their communities.



Ms Fokeladeh and Mr Elliott attended a planning meeting for the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), which will celebrate its 10th anniversary later this year. The meeting was attended by representatives from the World Medical Association, the International Hospital Federation, the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations and the International Pharmaceutical Federation.

Mr Elliott spoke at the round table event, emphasizing the vital role that nurses play in managing, administering and, increasingly, prescribing medicines. He praised IFPMMA's work and highlighted the importance for nurses of collaboration, transparency and a strong code of ethics.

The ICN CEO attended a side event entitled *Reaching the Unreached: Unlocking GAVI's Impact on Primary Healthcare and Community Health Workers* hosted by GAVI and the Community Health Impact Coalition (CHIC) to explore the strategic priorities needed to reach zero-dose and unvaccinated communities through health system strengthening. The event explored insights from high-level government stakeholders, funders, Gavi stakeholders and non-state implementers in order to discuss ideas on how Gavi can respond to gaps in the immunization response by investing in CHWs.

Karine Lavoie attended the J&J Global Health Equity event.

Richard Elliott attended a side event hosted by WHO and BBC StoryWorks Commercial Productions entitled *Healthier Together: A Path to a Better World*, which celebrated the power of storytelling for health promotion.



Erica Burton (right) delivered a statement at the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) side meeting, entitled 'The Effects of Nuclear War on Health and Health Services.'

[WHO's Director General, Dr Tedros, closing remarks on 1 June](#)

Right: ICN's nursing team members who attended the 77th WHA (L to R) - Karine Lavoie, Erica Burton and Hoi Shan Fokeladeh.

A wrap-up video by Howard Catton can be viewed [here](#).

