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Item 4(p) Progress report on the strategic framework for the implementation of Immunization Agenda 2030 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing over 30 million nurses worldwide, acknowledges the progress report on the strategic framework for the implementation of Immunization Agenda 2030 and expresses deep concern that immunization coverage in the region has continued to decline in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Immunization is one of the most powerful tools we have to protect global health security. Vaccines not only prevent disability, illness, and death, but they also reduce the spread of drug-resistant infections and preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics. Yet, in the face of climate change, migration, conflict, and urbanization, vaccine-preventable diseases can—and do—spread rapidly, placing populations at great risk.

Beyond health, immunization has far-reaching benefits for social and economic development. To deliver these outcomes, strong health systems are essential, equipped with reliable supplies and a well-prepared, adequately resourced workforce to ensure safe, effective, and uninterrupted vaccine delivery, even in times of crisis. Nurses are at the heart of immunization programmes. They drive integration of immunization with other essential health services, such as postnatal care and infectious disease prevention, and are often the closest point of contact for underserved communities. Their role is particularly critical in reaching unvaccinated and under-vaccinated populations, including displaced, mobile, and neglected groups.

ICN urges Member States to adopt laws, regulations, and policies that optimize the use of the nursing workforce and protect health workers in the delivery of immunization programmes. Nurses must be enabled to practice to the full extent of their education and professional development to expand the reach and effectiveness of vaccination efforts. Equally important is ensuring that nurses themselves have access to essential immunizations, such as the seasonal influenza vaccine, to safeguard their own health and safety. ICN also stresses the need for continuous professional development in

immunization across the nursing career span, and reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that nurses everywhere are equipped and prepared to provide vaccines safely and effectively.

Finally, ICN encourages countries to integrate robust strategies to measure and address vaccine hesitancy within national immunization programmes. Actively involving nurses in the planning, development, and implementation of immunization strategies at local, regional, and national levels will be key to restoring trust, increasing coverage, and achieving the goals of Immunization Agenda 2030.