



WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD 150th SESSION

Provisional agenda item 15.1

Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the over 27 million nurses worldwide.

While we support the need for a global health emergency workforce, to respond to health emergencies countries indisputably need a protected and respected nursing workforce to address the totality of healthcare needs and prevent health systems from collapse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted immense damage on the health workforce. ICN's latest report of evidence released this week has revealed a global health care crisis.

Designating international years for health workers is not enough - we need an actionable plan. ICN's report outlines an Action Agenda and we are calling for a ten-year global action plan to restore and retain the health workforce. This would deliver commitments to safe work environments, staffing levels and workloads, involvement in decision-making, mental health services and equitable compensation.

If urgent and sustainable action is not taken we will not recover from this pandemic, be prepared for the next, nor achieve Universal Health Coverage.