



72nd WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

May 2019

Provisional agenda item 19.0

Other matters referred to the Health Assembly by the Executive Board 2020: International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN).

We thank the Director General and the Executive Board for their recommendation to the Health Assembly to designate 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.

Making up approximately half of the health workforce, nurses are intrinsically linked to the ability of countries to address health priorities and achieve universal health coverage – daily, nurses are advocating for Health for All and often in the most challenging circumstances with limited resources.

Through ICN's 2019 International Nurses Day resource we are helping nurses around the globe understand the various aspects of universal health coverage and giving them the voice to lead to achieve it.

Designating 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife will allow us to honour the nursing and midwifery contribution to health and wellbeing and celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, one of the founders of modern nursing. This celebration will raise the visibility of the nursing profession in policy dialogue and garner investment in the development and increased capacity of the nursing workforce. We encourage all stakeholders to use the unique opportunity of 2020 to invest in and support the development of nurse leaders. Nurses, as both leaders and implementers, will turn the ambition of achieving health for all people into a reality.

The Nursing Now campaign has raised the profile of nursing and has highlighted the importance of the need for more well-educated nurses, of investing in recruitment and retention strategies and of removing barriers to advanced nursing roles that are proving highly effective at expanding healthcare coverage.

The adoption by the Health Assembly of the draft decision to designate 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife is enthusiastically welcomed by ICN and the over 20 million nurses worldwide.

Thank you.