



## **SEVENTY-FOURTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

### **Provisional agenda item 13.8 Immunization Agenda 2030**

May 2021

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) firmly believes that the over 27 million nurses worldwide are critical to implementation of the Immunization Agenda 2030 and strongly believes in the power of immunization as a tool for global health, sustainable development and ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nurses are the largest clinical providers of immunization worldwide. Findings from a recent ICN survey on COVID-19 mass immunization shows nurses play a key role in increasing vaccination rates and reducing vaccine hesitancy, particularly by supporting development of education resources and tools. As one of the most trusted professions, nurses support community engagement, increase health literacy and build public confidence in immunization.

In many of the countries that are highly effective in immunization, nurses are involved in national strategies and committees for COVID-19 vaccination. National Nurses Associations (NNAs) offer important contributions to national strategies and can swiftly mobilize the nursing workforce. NNAs can also facilitate planning and delivery of mass immunization through their established relationships with policy makers, service leaders and regulators. ICN calls on Member States to involve nurses and nursing organisations in planning, management, implementation and monitoring of immunization programmes at all levels.

ICN is deeply concerned by the gross inequalities globally in COVID-19 vaccine access. Right now, younger and less vulnerable people are being vaccinated in some countries before health care workers and vulnerable populations in other countries. ICN strongly believes that healthcare workers, healthcare students and vulnerable populations in middle- and low-income settings must receive the vaccine before younger and less vulnerable people in high-income settings. ICN urges relevant Member States to act swiftly on the IPPPR recommendation to provide the billions of doses needed in low- and middle-income countries and notes that sharing vaccines is in both health and economic interests of countries.

Vaccine equity and prioritization of vulnerable populations, nurses and healthcare workers is a fundamental issue of morality, ethics and human rights and should be non-negotiable.