



United Nations High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

September 23, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the over 20 million nurses worldwide. As the largest health profession in the health workforce, nurses are intrinsically linked to the ability of countries to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals. They work across the life course and in all settings and work beyond health to uphold human rights, fight to reduce inequalities and empower people and communities.

UHC will not be achieved without bold and innovative approaches to educate, develop and retain the health workforce. As such, ICN encourages Governments to heavily invest in a competent health workforce with a focus on nurses and midwives. This includes quality education, recruitment and retention strategies and assurance of decent work and fair pay.

ICN strongly supports the recognition of the Political Declaration that Primary Health Care (PHC) is the most effective approach to ensuring UHC. Nurses are the principal healthcare provider in PHC systems and are leading the development of innovative PHC initiatives worldwide. ICN calls on States and Government to transform PHC into the foundation of their health systems to deliver integrated and people-centered services.

ICN firmly believes that health is the foundation for prosperous people, communities and economies. Achieving UHC requires political leadership beyond that of the health sector and we urge States and Governments to drive political leadership for UHC in all sectors.