

ICN voices its concern about high-income countries recruiting nurses from nations that can ill-afford to lose their precious staff

Geneva, Switzerland; 26 January 2023 - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has reiterated its concerns about nurses in lower income countries being targeted for recruitment by wealthier nations.

ICN believes that all countries, especially high-income countries, should aim to be self-sufficient in creating enough nurses to meet their populations' needs.

Speaking to the United Nations Correspondents Association in Geneva, Switzerland, ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano said such recruitment, especially of senior and experienced nurses, is a particular concern.

Dr Cipriano said such recruitment “creates a serious deficit in expertise in countries that cannot afford to lose their more experienced nurses. When you take those nurses out of the clinical environment, you truly have a brain drain.

‘We’re appealing to the ethics of countries that health is a global issue. We don’t want to see some countries thrive and others hurt.’

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton said that although some countries had come to financial arrangements that involve them paying a fee per nurse to the donor countries, the amounts involved - in one case just USD 1,240 per nurse – were “woefully inadequate.”

Mr Catton said: “That, in no way, goes anywhere near recognising the true value of the training costs of that nurse, or the loss to the health system. I would expect to see USD 60,000 as a price to compensate for that experience at least — if not more.”

Mr Catton suggested that there should be a moratorium on active nurse recruitment by wealthier nations from up to 50 poorer countries to safeguard the nursing workforce and the health services in those countries.

ICN is urging governments to use its simple self-sufficiency indicator, published in its [COVID-19 and the International Supply of Nurses](#) report, to ensure that they are training and retaining enough nursing staff, without the necessity to attract nurses from countries that can ill-afford to lose their nurses.

It is based on the percentage of foreign born or foreign trained nurses and gives national policy makers an insight into the extent of their dependence on, and potential vulnerability to international nurse supply.

See some of the media coverage based on Dr Cipriano’s and Mr Catton’s comments:

[AFP](#) France and global

[EFE](#) Spain and global

[STERN](#) German

[Nigeria News](#) Nigeria and Africa