



Triad Communiqué 15 May, 2010

Government chief nursing and midwifery officers, representatives of national nursing and midwifery associations and regulatory bodies from 85 countries met in Geneva on 14-15 May 2010, together with the International Confederation of Midwives, the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organisation, to address issues critical to the provision of safe, quality nursing and midwifery care and effective regulation. Three themes were examined: the economic crisis - its impact and the way forward; the growing burden of chronic disease; and health system strengthening.

The global economic crisis and the scarcity of an appropriate nursing and midwifery workforce jeopardises the ability of many countries to reach the millennium development goals 4, 5 and 6 and to adequately address the increasing burden of chronic diseases. This contributes to inequities in health related to elderly, adolescent, women, newborn, and child populations, their associated disease burden, and in access to services, whether in high or low income countries.

Economic crisis

Evidence suggests that investment in health is vital to economic development and poverty reduction. Data from previous periods of economic recession indicate that health priorities such as supporting the capacity of health systems, reducing maternal–child morbidity and mortality, and reducing the burden of chronic disease suffer from under funding.

Nurses and midwives are well placed to contribute significantly in this era of austerity by identifying vulnerable populations and at risk groups, monitoring for signs of negative impacts on health systems and key health indicators, as well as participating in strengthening community-based interventions that mitigate the impact of poverty, and promote prevention and early disease detection. There is a strong need to invest in mental health, given the stressors during periods of economic crisis. The investment in mental health interventions will have positive long-term benefits in reducing stressors caused by unemployment and poverty that may exacerbate violence.

The economic downturn also affects resources needed for regulatory authorities to enforce legislation and standards for public protection. Reduction in capacity of regulators and educational institutions negatively affects nursing and midwifery practice and places patient safety in jeopardy.

Chronic disease

It is vital to focus on the social, cultural and political determinants of health that may destabilize social and individual health and contribute to the development of chronic disease. Implementing widespread disease prevention initiatives, supporting self-care and empowering people with chronic disease are key interventions in improving health and well being of our populations, and lie within nurses and midwives scopes of practice. Nurses and midwives are committed to the provision of integrated, rights based, people-centred care and are well positioned to actively lead interprofessional teams. We are poised to increase our leadership and participation in the reorganization of care as systems for managing the entire continuum of health provision. To this end, nursing and midwifery education must explicitly integrate comprehensive curriculum content on chronic disease prevention and management.

Health system strengthening

In the face of reform of health care systems globally, nurses and midwives must play a leadership role in the ongoing planning, development and evaluation of policy and services. This may include new models of health care delivery along with enhanced roles, functions and responsibilities. Moreover, to achieve the goal of providing appropriate, quality, integrated health care, health systems have to be unequivocally based on the Primary Health Care policy framework.

In order for nurses and midwives to be most effective high standards of professional lead education and regulation, and the ability to practice within the full scope of practice that is defined and enforced in all settings are essential. Nurses and midwives must play a leadership role in research, policy formulation and health system decision-making. This includes contributing to strategic planning, systems resource decision making, management and stewardship, through working with all partners and sectors.

To secure an effective and efficient workforce motivated to deliver quality services nurses and midwives must contribute to short and long term planning. Despite the need in some countries for short term austerity measures, and at a time when demands for nursing and midwifery expertise is likely to grow, governments must look to the future and not place patient care and outcomes at risk by sacrificing nursing and midwifery positions. If long term detrimental consequences are to be avoided and health improvements and progress achieved, now, more than ever, is the time to invest in nursing and midwifery.



The **International Council of Nurses (ICN)** is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. ICN is the international voice of nursing and works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally

3, Place Jean Marteau - 1201 - Geneva – Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 908 01 00 - Fax: + 41 22 908 01 01

E-mail: icn@icn.ch Web: www.icn.ch



The **International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)** represents 98 associations of midwives throughout the world. The confederation aims to support and strengthen the midwifery profession as a means of improving global maternal and newborn health.

Laan van Meerdervoort 70 - 2517 AN - The Hague - The Netherlands

Tel: +31 70 30 60 520 - Fax: + 31 70 35 55 651

Email: info@internationalmidwives.org Web: www.internationalmidwives.org



The **World Health Organization** is the United Nations specialized agency for health. It was established on 7 April 1948. WHO's objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.

Office of Nursing and Midwifery EIP/HRH, 20, Avenue Appia, 1211 - Geneva – Switzerland

Tel: +41 (22) 791 1049 – Fax: +41 (22) 791 4747

Email: yanj@who.int Web: www.who.int