

WRITTEN STATEMENT

International Council of Nurses

8.1 Annual report on monitoring progress on UHC and health-related SDGs

The International Council of Nurses (ICN), representing over 30 million nurses worldwide, welcomes the annual report on monitoring progress on universal health coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

ICN welcomes the recommendation that Member States strengthen primary health care, with a focus on quality, NCD prevention and management, healthy ageing, and equitable access to essential services. The report underscores the central role of nursing: the NCD sub-index, at 53, is the weakest in every Member State, and this was the only WHO region where RMNCH coverage declined between 2015 and 2023, despite strong evidence that nurse-led primary care improves these outcomes. Notably, health workforce density accounted for just 11% of coverage gains since 2000. The Region has made progress despite workforce shortages, but reaching the 2030 target of 80 will require closing that gap.

ICN's 2024 report, *Nursing and Primary Health Care: Towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage*, provides a practical pathway for this shift, including investment in the PHC nursing workforce, nurse-led care coordination, integrated team-based care, full scope of practice and advanced practice nursing.

ICN also welcomes the chapter on using climate change monitoring to strengthen public health action. Nurses are critical to climate-resilient health systems: they work in affected communities, identify climate-sensitive health risks, and maintain essential services during floods, storms, and heatwaves.

ICN calls on Member States to build the report's future-ready health workforce on nursing: funded positions in community-based primary care; nursing roles in climate-informed surveillance and national adaptation; implementation of the Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery 2021–2030 with empowered Chief Nursing Officers; and advanced practice roles for NCD management and healthy ageing.

There is no universal health coverage without nurses — and no climate-resilient health system without them either. ICN stands ready to support Member States in investing accordingly.