Asian Nursing Workforce Forum addresses challenges facing nursing in the region

Geneva, Switzerland; Taipei, Taiwan – 23 November 2017 - Nurse leaders representing ten national nursing associations (NNAs) across Asia gathered in Taipei, Taiwan for the 18th ICN Asian Workforce Forum to discuss the range of issues facing the region, including work environments and working conditions, educational levels, the need for evidence-based research, making an impact on policy and building health system resilience. Recognising the role of the profession in sustaining the environment, participants called for implementation of the WHO’s climate change and health work plan.

Following an environmental scan and a nursing data workforce profile, Howard Catton, ICN’s Director of Nursing and Health Policy, presented ICN’s global policy priorities. Key topics of discussion also included the use of technology to ensure quality of care and patient safety, presented by Dr Yupin Aungsuroch, Chairperson of International Affairs, Thailand Nurses Association; a presentation on building relationships with government and policy makers by
Dr Hsiu-Hung Wang, Vice President of Taiwan Nurses Association; and the recruitment and retention of nurses by Dr Oksoo Kim, President of the Korean Nurses Association. Participants also gave feedback on ICN’s position statement on climate change.

The Taiwan Nurses Association (TWNA) hosted the forum, held 14-15 November 2017, and co-chaired the two-day meeting in partnership with ICN. The countries represented included: China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand. The annual forum provides a platform for nurse leaders to share ideas and experiences related to socio-economic welfare nursing issues in the region.

Issues addressed focused primarily on the pervasive and recurrent staff shortage, including unsafe working conditions, high turnover rates and low wages, and the absence of standards of education and recognition. It was suggested that entry-level nursing education be upgraded to the bachelor level in the region.

NNAs stressed the importance of uniting their efforts to lobby for the profession in decision making processes at all levels and reinstated their will to act together. Finally, an emphasis was put on sustainability, by implementing strategies to address global health issues, social justice and climate change, building resilient healthcare systems across nations. The participants called on “all nations, national nurses associations, health stakeholders and governmental sectors to implement the WHO’s climate change and health work plan”.

“ICN Workforce Forums are an invaluable opportunity to network, share and address common problems”, said Howard Catton, ICN Director of Nursing and Health Policy. “We learn from each other’s experiences and strategize about how to deal with issues confronting nursing in many countries. This latest meeting showed impressive examples of innovation in both nursing and workforce policy across the region from which to learn.”

The Forum communiqué can be found here.

The ICN’s Asian Workforce Forum is an annual gathering that probes and debates nursing workforce issues and working conditions. ICN also holds an International Workforce Forum which stimulates thinking and enhances learning to ultimately develop proactive strategies. The Forums also assist to maintain the relevance of ICN programmes and support international work.

Note for Editors
The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.
For further information contact Lindsey Williamson at: media@icn.ch
Tel: +41 22 908 0100
Fax: +41 22 908 0101
www.icn.ch
@ICNurses

ICN/PR2017 #40

1 China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand