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ICN welcomes the draft Regional Plan to Accelerate Immunization Progress in the Western Pacific and its focus on reducing zero-dose and under immunized populations, achieving measles elimination and advancing immunization across the life course.

The scale of the challenge is clear. Nearly 1.7 million children in the Region were zero-dose in 2025, and declining coverage and widening immunity gaps place measles elimination at risk. Reaching those missed by immunization programmes is a measure of whether health systems are reaching the communities most likely to be left behind.

Nurses and midwives are central to this work. They provide vaccination, surveillance, health education, catch up and outreach services, and are often the most accessible and trusted health professionals in communities. To meet the Plan's goals, Member States must invest in an adequately supported, skilled and geographically distributed nursing and midwifery workforce, including the outreach capacity, transport, supplies and protected time needed to reach remote and underserved populations.

The Plan should also recognise nursing leadership in immunization governance. Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers, nurses with public health and immunization expertise, and national nursing associations should be involved in national planning and in relevant national and regional advisory mechanisms.

Nurses are essential to building vaccine confidence. Their trusted relationships with individuals, families and communities enable them to listen to concerns, address

misinformation with empathy and evidence, and adapt care to practical barriers to vaccination.

As immunization expands beyond childhood, nurses will be vital to integrating vaccination into school health, maternal health, primary care, community services and care for older people. They must be enabled to practise to the full scope of their education, competence and lawful authority.

Reaching zero-dose children means reaching communities. Nurses are essential to doing both.

Thank you.