



## **International Women's Day 2020**

### **STATEMENT - INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES & SIGMA THETA TAU INTERNATIONAL**

**March 2020**

**On the occasion of International Women's Day 2020** the International Council of Nurses and Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing (Sigma) and the over 21 million nurses worldwide who we represent, would like to celebrate women in their role as nurses and as carers. This year is a particularly special year considering it is the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and the large majority of nurses are women.

The evidence is clear: advancing and investing in the nursing profession will make for a healthier world, support gender equality and contribute to economic prosperity. The impact of this will be immense for the empowerment of women and should be seen as a key pathway to advancing this agenda.

Health and wellbeing are prerequisites for sustainable development and nurses are a key part of the solution to achieving global health for all. A nurse is often the first, and sometimes the only, healthcare professional in patient contact, and so they are critical to healthcare and social service access. As members of their local communities, and providing care from birth to death, they intimately understand and meet the needs of individuals and families.

Women and nurses have historically had limited presence in decision-making at all levels. ICN, Sigma, and nursing leaders around the world are working tirelessly to increase nurses' participation in leadership and senior decision-making roles. Through the nursing profession, women can, do, and will continue to become leaders.

When there is underinvestment in the nursing profession, women are most affected. As the largest group of healthcare professionals, we urge governments to mobilise resources to finance quality education, decent work, fair pay and safe work environments for nurses.

Raising the value of the nursing contribution will raise the status of women, and we encourage the leaders of the world to capitalise on this momentous year to do so.