

Intergovernmental Negotiating Body

Final meeting 18 March 2024

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) welcomes and supports the Pandemic Accord.

The pandemic took an enormous toll on the physical and mental health of the global healthcare workforce and nurses in particular. However the text at Article 7 of the Pandemic Accord does not fully reflect the severity and impact on health care workers (HCWs) and the urgency of action that is now required to address the critical global shortage of HCWs, which in itself constitutes a global health emergency.

Neither is the text of Art 7 fully aligned with the wording of last October's United Nations (UN) political declaration at the High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage. Specifically, in response to significantly increased international recruitment, which is being driven by a small number of high income countries: nurses in countries targeted for recruitment tell us it causes real health harms and widens health inequalities.

The UN declaration explicitly states that it

- Expresses deep concern at the continued shortfall of HCWs primarily in low and low and middle income countries.
- Recognizes the need to strengthen the global code of practice on IHR.
- Ensures that bilateral agreements entail proportional benefits.

Article 7.3 of the Pandemic Accord does not contain these action statements or convey this urgency, and should be strengthened to include them, thereby aligning the Accord with the UN declaration.

There is a great global inequity in the distribution, production and recruitment of HCWs, and that inequity, as evidenced in the current patterns of international recruitment of nurses, exacerbates inequalities in health access and outcomes.