

## ICN commemorates World Health Day and reiterates the importance of nursing in tackling the health effects of climate change

**Geneva, Switzerland, 7 April 2022** – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) joins the World Health Organization (WHO) in commemorating [World Health Day](#) and its *Our Planet, Our Health* theme, which emphasises the inextricable link between human health and the environment we all share.

The realities of global warming, coupled with the pandemic and the dire geopolitical situations that exist in many parts of the world, highlight that the need for investment in nursing and healthcare has never been greater. Just as health can never be taken for granted, neither can we ignore the powerful impact nurses can make to mitigate climate change and to support people and communities around the world to adapt to its impacts.

ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano said: “Nurses are witnessing first-hand the effects of climate change on people’s health, including worsening respiratory conditions, the effects of extreme heat, disruption in food sources and increased deaths in children under five from diarrhoeal disease because of a lack of access to safe water supplies. Its effects are felt around the world, but most keenly by people in lower income countries, another example of the gross health inequalities that must be addressed.

‘We need to reset our health systems with a massive expansion in the size of the nursing workforce, and investment in nursing education, jobs and leadership so that more nurses are in a position to influence the big picture of changes that are needed. Nurses are ready to make their contribution, but if we are to avert a catastrophic global climate crisis, governments need to seriously act on the commitments they made at the COP 26 meeting last year and elsewhere.’

ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton added: “We know the pandemic and the tense geopolitical situations around the world mean it is harder for governments to invest in combatting global warming, and also importantly, in nursing and healthcare more generally.

‘We agree with the World Health Organization that governments must put well-being and equity at the heart of their approach and to achieve this goal means putting sufficient and sustained health spending at the centre of everything they do. We are only too well aware of the serious repercussions if they do not.’

