



Islamabad Declaration on Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery 4-6 March 2007

Preamble

In May 2006, the World Health Assembly endorsed Resolution WHA59.27, reaffirming the crucial contribution of the nursing and midwifery professions to health systems and the health of the people they serve. In response, the Federal Minister of Health for Pakistan, Mr Mohammad Nasir Khan, former chair of the WHO Executive Board, hosted a high level global consultation on nursing and midwifery in March 2007, organised in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, the International Council of Nurses and the International Confederation of Midwives.

This Declaration is founded on our belief that efficient, effective nursing and midwifery services are critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, country priority programmes including primary health care, health systems strengthening, and the general health of all nations. Therefore, we **believe**:

1. All people should have access to competent nurses and midwives who provide care, supervision and support in all settings.
2. A coordinated, integrated, collaborative, sustainable approach to planning, policy and health care delivery is necessary to strengthen nursing and midwifery services and acknowledge that countries in crisis or conflict have unique needs.
3. Urgent attention is needed in three key areas:
 - scaling up nursing and midwifery capacity
 - skill mix of existing and new cadres of workers
 - positive workplace environments.

We **affirm** that equitable, efficient and effective nursing and midwifery service delivery requires a range of personnel and that, prior to creating new cadres, investments should be made in mobilizing nurses and midwives currently under-utilized, unemployed, working in other sectors, or who have left active practice.

We **declare** the following principles fundamental to decision making, effective policy development, planning, implementation, evaluation and quality assurance of education and health services, and of value to a wide range of stakeholders.

Principles for scaling up nursing and midwifery capacity

Scaling up nursing and midwifery capacity encompasses a range of strategies that address workforce planning, education, skill-mix, maximum utilization of roles, career frameworks, work environments and regulatory frameworks to ensure efficient, effective, and safe health systems.

High level political leadership and commitment, a multi-sectoral approach, significant financial investment in education and employment expansion, and active participation of nursing and midwifery leaders are required to enhance scaling up of the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Each country must establish policies and practices to ensure self-sufficiency in workforce production within the limits of its own resources.

Nursing and midwifery capacity development requires ongoing data collection and its integration into health information systems, as well as regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation to enhance evidence-based decision making.

Rapid scaling-up measures may be appropriate in country specific crisis situations; such measures should contribute to longer term sustainable development of the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Principles addressing skill mix and new cadres of workers

Decisions regarding nursing and midwifery and the related workforce should be country-specific, led by nurses and midwives, take account of local service delivery needs, the current configuration of health services and provider mix, available resources, and production and training capacity.

A registered nurse or midwife must provide direction, supervision and management of support staff, including new cadres, wherever they contribute to nursing and midwifery practice.

Roles and job descriptions should be described on the basis of the competencies required for service delivery and constitute part of a coherent competency-based career framework that encourages progression through lifelong learning and recognition of existing and changing competence.

Ongoing evaluation, particularly in skill-mix changes and the introduction of new cadres and or new models of care should systematically consider the impact on patient and health outcomes as well as on efficiency and effectiveness.

Principles addressing positive workplace environments

Employment practices that address workload, scheduling, necessary infrastructure and support systems, and provide safe, secure working conditions are necessary to assure occupational health and patient and health care provider safety.

Workplace policies that assure gender equity, adequate employee compensation, recognition, professional development opportunities and continuing education are essential contributors to recruitment and retention of a committed, productive and efficient workforce.

Policy frameworks that support participatory decision making, autonomy, authority and accountability along with positive interdisciplinary relationships and effective nursing and midwifery management are essential to creating and sustaining positive practice environments

Positive practice environments are facilitated when nursing and midwifery leadership is part of, and actively involved in, all governance structures.

In conclusion

We **reaffirm** the importance of WHO and Member States, the International Council of Nurses, the International Confederation of Midwives, national nursing and midwifery organisations and other partner organisations committing to active measures to strengthen nursing and midwifery, in line with the Millennium Development Goals, Resolution WHA59.27, priority programmes and other initiatives.

We **urge** policy makers, planners, politicians, employers, health professions and their associations, donors, educators, regulators, and patient representative organisations to utilise these principles as they strive to ensure better health and health care for the people of all nations.

We **pledge** to work at the sub-national, national, regional, and international level, in partnership with all relevant ministries and bodies, statutory and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector, to realize the aspiration of this Declaration.