ICN and FNIF have appointed Dr Sheila Tlou, specialist in women's health and HIV/AIDS, nursing educator and former Minister of Health of Botswana, to represent the Girl Child Education Fund and to further champion girls' right to education.

Sheila Tlou is currently Director of UNAIDS for Eastern and Southern Africa and an internationally renowned leader in nursing, health, gender and development. Her role as GCEF Ambassador will include acting as an international spokesperson, promoting the importance of educating girls and raising the profile of the GCEF.

“Dr Tlou is a wonderful choice for Ambassador to the Girl Child Education Fund, given her deep commitment to the promotion of gender equity, particularly the education of girls and women, and her experience in health and nursing at the highest levels”, said David C. Benton, Chief Executive Officer of ICN and FNIF.

Dr Tlou will give the keynote speech at the 9th Biennial FNIF Fundraising Luncheon at the ICN Congress in Melbourne on 21 May.

“\n\nThe importance of educating girls cannot be overestimated, nor can the injustice of denying them such an opportunity. I am delighted to be championing the GCEF and proud to be associated with the International Council of Nurses in this noble cause.

Opening the doors to education for girls and women leads to better health for them and their communities; increased demand and realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights; reduced infant and maternal mortality; and, increased economic and social development. It is above all the right thing to do."

Dr Sheila Tlou, GCEF Ambassador

www.fnif.org
National Council of State Boards of Nursing makes generous donation to the GCEF

In celebration of its 35 years of nursing regulatory success, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Inc. (NCSBN) is donating $35,000 to the Girl Child Education Fund (GCEF).

"ICN is sincerely grateful to NCSBN for its generous support of the Girl Child Education Fund," said David C. Benton. "Thanks to donations such as these we have enabled over 130 girls to complete high school; many of whom have gone on to tertiary education. By supporting these girls, the NCSBN is showing solidarity with their nursing colleagues in sub-Saharan Africa, whose harsh working conditions may threaten the livelihood and future of their children. We know that educating girls leads to better health for themselves, their families and their communities, and we thank the NCSBN for their generous gift."

The donation will be presented during NCSBN’s anniversary celebrations at its Annual Meeting and Delegate Assembly August 14-16, 2013, in Providence, Rhode Island, USA.

Special donation of Nokero solar lamps lights the way for GCEF scholars

“I had no idea how a simple light can change the children’s lives until today”
Faith Mbehero, GCEF Coordinator in Kenya

Small, solar light bulbs are making a big difference for the girls in the Girl Child Education Fund, lighting their evenings and enabling them to do homework and study at night. More than 60% of the GCEF girls do not have reliable access to electricity. Many of them use highly polluting kerosene lamps to study by at night. Others use candles or simply do not have any light by which to do school work at home.

The donation of the simple and safe Nokero solar lamp means each girl now has an independent light source of her own, providing the potential to improve her school performance and life quality. No more squinting and stumbling. Advancing their capacity, educational outcomes and quality of life has a direct impact on the girls’ health, education and productivity and that of their future families.

In Kenya, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia, the GCEF Coordinators have undertaken a survey to measure the impact of the solar light on the girls’ school performance and life quality. Standardized pre and post interviews with the girls, their guardians and some teachers are being conducted and analysed, with the results being presented at the ICN 25th Quadrennial Congress in Melbourne, Australia.

“I study by candle light and it makes me not to finish my homework in good time”.
Sarah, 11 years of age

“Because I have eye complications, my homemade oil lamp makes me feel very sick and I can’t study well, thus reducing my performance”.
Jennifer, 13 years of age

Clean, safe solar light is now lighting the way for the GCEF scholars.
The Girl Child Education Fund is one of seven charities set to benefit from Flight for Every Mother (FEM) - an innovative maternal health project aiming to raise awareness about maternal health, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Directed by obstetrician and pilot Dr Sophia Webster, the Flight for Every Mother all-female team will fly from Cape Town to England via 23 African countries, from August to November 2013.

The flight path will target countries that are furthest from reaching Millennium Development Goal 5 - to reduce maternal mortality and improve maternal health. The FEM team will stop along the way to raise awareness about maternal health, visit local facilities caring for pregnant women, provide labour ward teaching and offer donations of basic equipment.

Flight for Every Mother will also fund-raise for GCEF and the other six charities, all of which have been chosen because their sustainable work focuses on a different aspect of maternal health. Many factors impact reproductive health outcomes for women, including little or no formal education, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, violence, poverty and poor access to skilled health care.

The project aims to draw attention and to raise funds via sponsorship. The FEM pilots will create an international following by way of an on-line blog detailing their challenging journey. Filming may take place to facilitate the production of a documentary.

Dr Sophia Webster has a passion for global maternal health and travels regularly to countries in sub-Saharan Africa to teach clinical skills to doctors, nurses, midwives and community health workers. The FEM project is sponsored by the UK Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Flight for Every Mother can be found on line at www.flightforeverymother.com.
FEM director, Dr Sophia Webster can be contacted via sophia@flightforeverymother.com

* GCEF, AMREF, SMILE, Life for African Mothers, Transaid, 28toomany, mothers2mothers

** South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Senegal, the Gambia, Western Sahara and Morocco

GCEF supports the primary and secondary schooling of the orphaned daughters of nurses.

Thank you for helping to keep the girls in school and for giving them the chance of a brighter future by purchasing a GCEF Florence Nightingale Teddy Bear.
The Florence Nightingale International Foundation is pleased to wish all nurses around the globe a Happy International Nurses Day 2013. As the premier foundation of the International Council of Nurses, it supports and complements the work and objectives of ICN.

For International Nurses Day 2013, ICN has chosen the theme Closing the Gap: the Millennium Development Goals: 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. This slogan is intended to be a countdown to 2015, with an emphasis on the health related goals. ICN firmly believes that one of the best ways to achieve the MDGs is to maximise the potential of nurses. In fact, it has been shown that increased financial resources, though urgently needed, are insufficient to improve access to health services and attain health objectives such as MDGs. Qualified providers, available in adequate numbers to deliver the services, are also essential.

As the largest health care profession in the world, there is no doubt that nurses are key to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Nurses are often the only health professionals accessible to many people in their lifetime, and so are particularly well placed and innovative in reaching underserved and disadvantaged populations. Nurses are educated to understand the complex nature of maintaining health and wellness, and the impact of psychosocial and socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment and ethnicity.

Nurses have done much towards the achievement of the MDGs and to help shape and deliver sustainable goals and outcomes beyond 2015. And we can be proud of our achievements. Yet there is still more that we can - and must - do.

FNIF encourages you all to read this year’s IND Kit, available from www.icn.ch/publications/international-nurses-day, and discover the ways in which you can fulfil the important role of helping to achieve the MDGs. The countdown is on. The clock is ticking and we are running out of time. Each and every one of you can make a difference. In the words of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, “There is no global project more worthwhile ...Let us keep the promise.”

Happy International Nurses Day

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Celebrate International Nurses Day with a Florence Nightingale bear

The ICN.FNIF Florence Nightingale Teddy Bear is being sold in support of the Girl Child Education Fund (GCEF), which provides for the primary and secondary schooling of the orphaned daughters of nurses in developing countries, paying for school fees, uniforms, shoes and books.

This beautiful fully jointed teddy bear has been hand made with care by the Great British Teddy Bear Company. Florence is 34cm tall and wears a miniature of the blue and white dress once worn by ‘Nightingale nurses’, and carries a replica of her famous lamp. Her khaki canvas bag holds three little bandages so that she can nurse any injured toys she meets as she travels the globe raising valuable funds for the GCEF.

The Florence Nightingale Teddy Bear conforms to all International Toy Safety regulations and is suitable for all aspiring nurses 3 years and above. Please go to www.gcefbear.com to place your order.