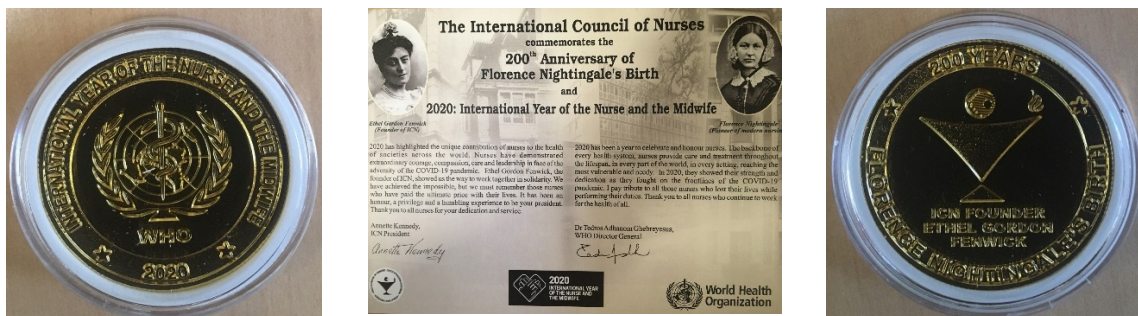


## Year of the Nurse and Midwife coins & certificates issued by International Council of Nurses and World Health Organization



**Geneva, Switzerland; 1 July 2021** – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have issued a commemorative coin and certificate for the ICN's member national nursing associations and the ICN Board of Directors to thank them for their service during the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coins and certificates were designed by former ICN Board Member, Kallooa Bagoaduth. Signed by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General, and Annette Kennedy, ICN President, the commemorative coins and certificates also mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth and have been sent to the ICN Board and members NNAs in celebration of ICN's Founders Day on 1 July.

Dr Tedros, in his citation, said:

"2020 has been a year to celebrate and honour nurses. The backbone of every health systems, nurses provide care and treatment throughout the lifespan, in every part of the world, in every setting, reaching the most vulnerable and needy. In 2020, they showed their strength and dedication as they fought on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. I pay tribute to all those nurse who lost their lives while performing their duties. Thank you to all nurses who continue to work for the health of all."

Annette Kennedy said:

"2020 was an exceptional year for us all and the incredible work of nurses across the globe was highlighted in ways we could never have imagined. Sadly, we lost many of our colleagues to this pandemic, and they must never be forgotten. I hope that this small token of this special year will remind you not only of those sacrifices, but also of the strength, determination and dedication of all nurses."

2020 was designated as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Assembly (WHA), the decision-making body of WHO. The celebrations of nursing and midwifery were overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic which thrust the health professions into the spotlight in unexpected ways. Nurses across the world fought the pandemic with incredible strength and determination and cared for patients through the worst of times, often being the only people by their sides in their final moments. Nurses battled on the frontlines of the pandemic, often with no or inadequate protection, under-staffed, under-resourced and underpaid.

At the WHA in May this year, Dr Tedros announced that COVID-19 had taken the lives of at least 115,000 health and care workers. ICN, which represents the global voice of the 27 million nurses across the world, has been calling on governments to protect and invest in the nursing workforce, and has written to the G7, the G20 and the United Nations to lobby for a Declaration on Pandemic Preparedness and create a supra-governmental body to oversee global responses to international health emergencies. ICN has also called for world leaders to agree a global pandemic treaty that will better prepare and strengthen health systems, and put the protection and safety of nurses and healthcare workers at its very heart.

When US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Geneva in June, ICN joined the Swiss Nurses Association to call for immediate action of the global vaccination roll-out to ensure that nurses and other health and care workers are prioritised and that vaccines reach the world's poorest countries.

The idea of an International Council of Nurses was first proposed by Ethel Gordon Fenwick on 1 July 1899 at the Annual Conference of the Matron's Council of Britain and Ireland. The idea accepted, a Provisional Committee was formed the next day including nursing representatives from Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa (Cape Colony), the United Kingdom and the USA. A year later, in 1901, ICN held its first International Congress in Buffalo, New York, USA. On 2-4 November 2021, 120 years after its first Congress, ICN will hold its 28<sup>th</sup> Congress via a virtual platform. For more information and to register go to <https://icncongress2021.org/>

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### **Note to Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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