

## Editorial



Whilst celebrating International Nurses Day on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, it often happens that we as nurses must explain to some of our colleagues and friends why we need to celebrate our profession. The mere fact that nurses as a professional grouping in the workplace use the opportunity to showcase the profession as well as to recognize those that contributed to the profession, remains a bone of contention to many. Since its inception, this annual event has managed to serve as a motivator for nurse leaders to focus on the positive aspects of the profession and to use their creativity to ensure that the nursing staff have special memories (and gifts) of this day.

Those institutions that celebrate nursing, experience the preparation for and the actual function as very positive; nurses live their passion on this day. The question then comes to mind of how we can celebrate not only a day, a week or a month, but how we can successfully implement measures to ensure a year with 365 nurses' days? Will it always be just a farfetched dream or can it be the ultimate goal for nurse leaders to live their profession in such a way that for 365 days the nurses will want to follow their example. Just imagine for a moment this dream becoming a reality, the sudden impetus and energy that will infuse all our healthcare institutions. Our environment will be transformed into places of care and compassion. Patients and their families will look forward to being part of the healthcare service delivery in our country. It will never again be necessary for the radio presenter to ask the listeners to tell their favorite nurse's story only, but also their negative encounters.

During our efforts to change and improve the lives of those that we serve, it is important that we keep the goal of 2017 alive. *Nurses: A Voice to Lead, Achieving the Sustainable*

*Development Goals*, the 2017 International Nurses Day theme. The International Council of Nurses chose this theme to raise awareness amongst the nursing profession of what SDG's are and why they matter. The SDG's are planned to be reached by 2030 and to achieve this timeline action has to be taken now. This year's campaign aims to give to all the chance to contribute at their level and to recognise the efforts they already make every day to achieve these goals.

Nurses are continuously contributing to Goal 3: *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*, but is it possible to attend to this goal in isolation or must we incorporate the remaining sixteen goals into our planning and implementation? If we look at the first six goals only, namely Poverty, Zero Hunger, Health, Education, Gender Equality and Water and Sanitation, it is quite clear that we have to deal with all the goals to ensure a successful outcome to Goal 3. We have to carefully rethink our actions and our involvement in our communities; let us start planning on how each of us can take a small step in contributing to not only the health but also the general well-being of our communities and our country. *"There is a world of apathy out there. Every single day there are many things out there that aren't right. While you have to pick your battle, it is very important that when you encounter things that aren't right, you weigh in on them. Leadership is learning how to do that effectively. You won't be a reasonable leader if you don't have the instinct to say: "This is something I have to put right." (Maria Salmon, Former Chief Nursing Officer, US Department of Health and Human Services)*

The ICN reiterates the contribution that nurses can make and nurses can be a Voice To Lead as:

- An individual – each and every nurse has a voice and can use that voice to make a difference, leadership is key to making your voice heard
- A profession – nursing professional associations play a key role in bringing the profession together and be the one voice to be heard
- As part of a multidisciplinary team – teamwork and communication between the professions is essential to provide patient-centred care.

*"It is up to us - each and every one of us - to be a voice to lead others, our patients, our colleagues, our communities and our governments to better health. Let your voice be heard!" (ICN – A Voice To Lead Guidance Pack)*