



Nordic Nurses' Federation

To the Governments of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Faroe Island.

The Nordic Nurses' Federation, representing 340,000 nurses, urge our governments to adopt a sustainable and ethical strategy for planning, investing, educating, recruiting, and retaining nurses. The current reliance on the recruitment of international educated nurses to address the nursing shortage in the Nordic region is not a viable long-term solution.

We support the right of individual nurses to migrate, but this differs significantly from active international recruitment, which can lead to negative impacts on the healthcare systems of “so-called” source countries. Unethical recruitment practices contribute to global health inequalities and will undermine efforts to achieve and sustain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The Nordic countries must:

- 1. Reject Quick-Fix Responses:** We say no to quick-fix responses that can damage source countries and undermine attainment of SDGs and UHC and instead call for sound national policies and substantial investments to build a stable and self-sufficient nursing workforce.
- 2. Invest in Domestic Workforce:** Invest in the education, training, and retention of nurses within the Nordic countries. Provide adequate support, fair wages, and safe working conditions and staffing levels to make nursing a sustainable and attractive career.
- 3. Ethical Recruitment Practices:** Any international recruitment must adhere to ethical standards, in line with the World Health Organization's Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel, ensuring that it does



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not exacerbate global inequalities in health. All Nordic countries should comply with the reporting requirements of the implementation of the Code. Additionally, the activities of recruitment agencies should be closely monitored to ensure transparency and that they operate in line with these ethical standards.

4. Bilateral Agreements: Engage in partnerships with source countries, emphasizing shared benefits and capacity-building. Bilateral labour agreements for nurse recruitment should provide equitable advantages and comply with WHO guidelines. These agreements must involve social partners such as chief nursing officers, nurse leaders and national nursing associations and be led by health ministries to ensure the rights, health, and well-being of international educated nurses.

We highlight that today, 10 high-income countries have 23% of the world's nurses, doctors, and midwives, while high-income countries generally have 12 times as many healthcare employees as low-income countries. This disparity is a significant obstacle to achieving the global right to health, as promised by the 17 SDGs in 2015.

We call on the Nordic governments to:

- Strengthen domestic workforce planning through investment in education, training, and retention of nurses.
- Adopt and enforce ethical recruitment standards aligned with WHO's Global Code of Practice and comply with Code reporting requirements.
- Ensure comprehensive integration and professional development for internationally recruited nurses.
- Promote international collaboration that supports global nursing education and workforce development.



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- Adopt and enforce ethical recruitment standards in line with WHO's Global Code of Practice, while also implementing bilateral labor agreements as a key mechanism to protect both nurses and healthcare systems in source and destination countries.

By taking these actions, we can ensure that our healthcare systems remain resilient and capable of providing high-quality care, while upholding our commitment to ethical practices and global health equity.