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## **Survey Shows Attention Required to Keep Ugandan Nurses in the Profession**

**Kampala, Uganda, 11 January, 2010** – Commenting on the recently published nurses' attitudinal survey, General Secretary of the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union (UNMU), Sulaiman Bateganya said today, "the results clearly show that the severe workload challenges faced by nursing in Uganda are impacting patient care and health outcomes which, if remain unaddressed, will lead to the additional exodus of nurses from the profession within our country and the continued erosion of Uganda's health system."

The survey provided a snapshot of the primarily urban nursing population who on average spend approximately 75% of their working day in contact with patients. The two hundred nurses surveyed in Uganda formed part of a global survey of more than 2 000 nurses across eleven countries.

Only 12% of nurses in Uganda say they are very satisfied with nursing as a career making Uganda among the lowest ranking of the countries surveyed. Further, only 32% of Ugandan nurses said they were very likely to remain in the profession in the next five years against a global average of 53%, making Uganda the lowest ranking of the eleven countries surveyed.

"With a nurse patient ratio of 6 per 100,000 against the WHO recommended 2.5 per 1,000, it is not surprising that the respondents cited workload as the main cause of dissatisfaction," said Bateganya. "What is of great concern is that nurses view the high workloads as having a negative impact on the quality of patient care, and seventy four percent said having the opportunity to spend more time with their patients would have very significant impact on patient health." he continued.

According to Bateganya, the results clearly show that under the right conditions, nurses in Uganda are committed to working towards improved patient health. If current conditions are not improved, an exodus from the profession could be experienced with dire consequences for an already burdened public health system.

Commenting on the findings, the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the global federation of national nurses associations, underlined the urgency of responding to the needs of nurses in Uganda.

### **Editor's Note**

ICN and Pfizer Inc. External Medical Affairs collaborated on a global representative survey of 2,203 nurses in eleven countries, including Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, South Africa, Taiwan, Uganda, the UK, and the U.S. The survey was conducted by APCO Insight. Collated global results and methodology can be viewed at [www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch).

Key findings in Uganda include:

- More than four in ten respondents said that nursing was better today than 5 years ago (45%) and that the recognition you receive for your contribution as a nurse is better than it was 5 years ago (43%).
- 27% of respondents stated workload as the most unfavourable part of nursing today followed by pay, benefits and incentives (18%) and then supply shortages, budget cuts and inadequate systems (10%), as well as risk of contracting infectious disease 10%.
- Nurses in Uganda scored lowest in terms of the likelihood of remaining in their profession – 32% against a global average of 53%.
- 29% of nurses in Uganda have the authority to prescribe medicines versus the global average of 17%. 84% feel that to have this authority would be of benefit.

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 since 1899, ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all and sound health policies globally.

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