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NEWS RELEASE



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AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES CALLS FOR THE FORMATION OF A UN WOMEN'S AGENCY

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association urges its members, and all healthcare professionals to lobby your UN representatives, heads of state and legislators about the critical need for a fully funded UN Women's organization, to address gender equality concerns globally. On Friday, June 22, 2007 the UN General Assembly will debate the issue of establishing an agency to act as advocates for the rights and health of women and girls worldwide.

The ANA has been a leader in campaigning for a dedicated women's agency based on the belief that the current structures within the UN are insufficient in scope, coordination and resources to make significant progress in those global problems that we, as nurses, recognize as having detrimental effects on women and girls. These problems include poverty, gender-based violence, poor access to health care and inadequate education. The creation of a separate agency within the UN system, could have potential, over time, of improving the physical and psychological well-being of over half of the world's population.

More than 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion poor are women; maternal mortality rates have not improved for almost two decades; and virtually all maternal deaths (99 per cent) occur in developing countries. Fundamental gender inequalities fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where women and girls now make up over 60% of those living with HIV and 76% of those in the 15-24 years of age group.

You have the opportunity to have a significant impact on an issue of international importance, with repercussions for generations to come. As powerful advocates for the rights and health of women and girls, you can ensure their voices are heard. It is important to underscore that when more women are in decision making roles, the global health will be impacted in a positive way for all peoples, regardless of gender.

More information including model letters, fax numbers for UN Ambassadors and background information is available for your use on International Council of Nurses website at www.icn.ch/waa.htm

MORE

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.