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Geneva, 26 May 1994

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the report¹ of the second meeting of the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery held in Geneva from 8 to 10 November 1993 which was sent to you on 31 January 1994 by surface mail. An annex to the report entitled "National Action Plans for Nursing: From Vision to Implementation" provides a practical guideline for initiating change at country level.

Cost-effective ways to provide primary health care remain a challenge to all countries, developing and industrialized alike. The nursing/midwifery workforce is singled out as an important resource for responding to basic care and public health needs in countries.

The report contains recommendations for country action. They are:

- (1) to develop national action plans for nursing/midwifery, which are consistent with national health plans;
- (2) to use nursing/midwifery indicators developed by WHO to monitor progress on resolution WHA45.5 and report to the 1996 World Health Assembly;
- (3) to strengthen management and leadership skills in nursing/midwifery through multidisciplinary management development programmes which specifically address nursing/midwifery needs at country, district and subdistrict levels, and by allocating more fellowships to nurses/midwives.

Concerning the first recommendation, clearly action plans for nursing/midwifery need to be developed in relation to other segments of the health workforce. It would be opportune to embark on a wider analysis of the total health workforce. This would allow modifications which ensure that the action plans are balanced and optimally productive and cost-effective.



¹ Document WHO/HRH/NUR/93.5, available in English only.

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With regard to the second recommendation on monitoring progress, WHO is in the process of developing a questionnaire which will help countries determine progress. The replies will be used in the preparation of my report to the Executive Board and the World Health Assembly in 1996, as requested in resolution WHA45.5, "Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery in Support of Strategies for Health for All".

The third recommendation naturally follows the first.

I should like to assure you that WHO stands ready to support you in your efforts.

Please accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Hiroshi Nakajima, M.D., Ph.D.
Director-General