ECSACON Statement in response to Covid-19

Following Covid-19 emergence and unfolding, WHO has declared it as a global Pandemic. We continue to see the disease spreading like wild fire despite all the efforts that the healthcare providers put in fighting the disease. The disease is now with us right here in Africa. Nurses and Midwives as the front liners in the healthcare continue to be at risk of contracting the disease and even passing it to their families. We see the countries putting in place measures to combat the pandemic like closing borders, closing schools, encouraging their people to keep distance from one another and so on. When it comes to nursing and midwifery these measures are impracticable as you cannot assess a suspect or even nurse a patient without close proximity. It is therefore in line with this situation that we urge countries to provide nurses and midwives as well as other healthcare providers with adequate and proper protective gears. It is also obvious that nurses and midwives work over stretched hours without rest and adequate meals. The role of nurses and midwives cannot be overemphasized in the provision of healthcare services in combating the pandemic. As ECSACON we acknowledge this role and encourage them to do all in their ability.

We urge employers both public and private and other healthcare partners to:

1) Actively engage with Nurses and Midwives in whatever decisions are taken towards Nursing and Midwifery services.
2) Ensure that necessary support in terms of Positive Practice Environment (PPE), other equipment and drug supply,
3) Rest periods and meals
4) Psychological support

Are availed at all times as lack of these increase the risks of contracting the disease.

We strongly condemn situations whereby decisions are made for nurses and midwives without their involvement. This a time we need all Senior Nurses, Regulatory bodies and National Nursing Associations (NNAs) to be included in all decisions pertaining to nursing and midwifery to advice as experts in clinical
practice, nursing regulation and nursing and midwifery professional matters. Active engagement with nurses and midwives is needed NOW more than before.

2020 was declared as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife by WHO. We note with concern that nurses and midwives have not enjoyed this celebration as the disease started in December 2019 and grew very fast bringing fear and panic. All activities planned for the celebrations have not seen the light of the day as all attention is shifted to Covid-19.

To all fellow nurses and midwives let us support all interventions at our disposal to contain the disease and taking opportunity of our presence in all Primary Health Care facilities and communities to educate the population in proper hand washing technique.

Let us make Florence Nightingale proud. Let us see her smile over us as we do all in our capacity to save our fellow people. It was during a tough time like this during the Crimean war when she rose and helped and saved the wounded soldiers. It is also in this difficult time when we celebrate her 200th birthday by rising up to save our people from the pandemic. I urge everyone to take all the necessary precautions and advices from the experts to protect ourselves, let us update ourselves with latest updates from WHO and other countries’ shared stories. For our ECSA region we stand with all our sister countries who have already had cases and we shall at all times encourage and lift each other’s’ spirit. As it is, everyone is either infected or affected.

Together we shall win the battle against COVID-19 Disease.

God bless all nurses and midwives

God bless ECSACON

Ms. Keoagetse Kgwabi

ECSACON PRESIDENT