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**European Nurse and Midwifery Leaders Identify Regional Health Issues
During Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting**

Meeting convened by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International

INDIANAPOLIS — The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) convened the European regional meeting of the **Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing & Midwifery (GAPFON)**, 1-2 June in Amsterdam, Netherlands. More than 25 key nursing and midwifery leaders from the European Union, Switzerland, and Albania met to identify the top regional health issues in Europe and determine strategies to allow nursing and midwifery professionals to impact those issues.

GAPFON priority issues and health challenges in Europe

During the meeting, participants confirmed that priority issues and action strategies must focus on healthcare leadership, policy, education/curriculum, and workforce/practice. Participants were passionate about the fact that these priorities are inter-related and each is integral to the achievement of regional goals. They identified quality of care as an essential overarching theme to be integrated within all strategies and recommendations.

The stakeholders discussed the importance of universal health care and the value of leveraging the return on investment that nursing contributes to the attainment of health. They agreed that nurses and midwives can play a pivotal leadership role in ensuring access to health care – especially community based care. Given the role that healthy behaviors play in optimal health, they agreed that health promotion focused on disease prevention is vital.

During their discussions, stakeholders identified specific strategies to cultivate and position nursing and midwifery leaders, whereby the evidence and value of the profession(s) can positively impact regional and global health policy. In addition, they identified supporting and promoting clinical academic careers as essential to quality nursing and midwifery practice, as well as the importance of patient/population and public involvement. These strategies are congruent with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The health issues identified as primary concerns to the European region are non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health, ageing, and maternal child health. In addition to the key health issues identified, the stakeholders also discussed a variety of other concerns, specifically noting challenges related to migrant/refugee health.

Reflecting on the meeting, **International Council of Nurses (ICN) Chief Executive Officer Dr Frances Hughes** said, “ICN as the global voice of nursing applauds the collaboration amongst nursing and midwifery organisations in Europe to tackle key health issues. The key discussions that occurred among these stakeholders related to leadership, policy, and social justice – all of which are critical issues both in the European region and across the globe.”

Christine Hancock, Founder and Director of C3 Collaborating for Health, said, “The two-day GAPFON meeting in Amsterdam provided space and good professional company to reflect on the important health issues affecting Europe and nursing’s contribution to those issues. I was delighted to hear how many times this group of leading European nurses and midwives spoke of the important role nurses have in the prevention of NCDs.”

Dr Teresa Moreno-Casbas, Director of the Spanish Nursing and HealthCare Research Unit (Investén-isciii) of the Institute of Health “Carlos III”, said, “I appreciate GAPFON and STTI for the opportunity to analyse the current situation and future challenges of nursing and midwifery in Europe, and to incorporate the Spanish vision on these issues in the context of Global Health. GAPFON positions nurses and midwives to lead the needed strategies to meet the global health goals and challenges of the 21st Century. I believe this panel will show that when nurses’ knowledge and experience joins with leadership (combined with innovation, commitment, and solidarity), nurses have a strong voice to lead the best care for our populations, patients, and their families.”

The outcomes of the GAPFON European Regional meeting also reflected strong regional support for the priority areas of the World Health Organization (WHO), including education, research, policies and strategies, communication, and interprofessional collaboration.

Following the discussions, **STTI President Cathy Catrambone, RN, PhD, FAAN**, said, “The nursing and midwifery leaders who participated in the GAPFON European Regional meeting are passionate about the delivery of quality care, policy development, support for the enhancement of the profession, and bringing a collaborative voice to address these issues. I look forward to the long-term impact our collaborative efforts will have on global health”

The GAPFON European Regional Meeting represents one of seven global regions where STTI has conducted meetings during the past two years. In July, STTI will convene its final GAPFON regional meeting in Cape Town, South Africa. Data from these meetings will provide the basis for an overall action plan with regional policy implications. GAPFON will

analyze and prioritize key recommendations addressing each of the region's challenges in both global and regional summary reports and will post these at www.gapfon.org.

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About GAPFON

The Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON) was convened by The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) as a catalyst for nurse leaders to work together and develop a unified voice and vision for the future of nursing and health care globally. GAPFON is sponsored by Pfizer, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. In addition, Elsevier Education sponsored the European regional meeting. For more information about GAPFON, visit www.gapfon.org.

About STTI

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is advancing world health and celebrating nursing excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. Founded in 1922, STTI has more than 135,000 active members in more than 85 countries. Members include practicing nurses, instructors, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs and others. STTI's more than 500 chapters are located at approximately 700 institutions of higher education throughout Armenia, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, England, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, the United States, and Wales. More information about STTI can be found online at www.nursingsociety.org.