



Statement by:

**The International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants
Comité International Catholique des Infirmières et Assistantes Médico-Sociales
(CICIAMS)**

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Oral Presentation

“Strengthening the collection and distribution of demographic data in support of the
2015 Sustainable and Development Goals”

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Secretariat of the Commission, distinguished panel members, national delegation members & guest
Documentation of birth demographics as well as end of life death pronouncements are within the
scope of nursing practice and are generated by nurses. Basic human rights of privacy and
confidentiality can be threatened by methods utilized to obtain and distribute personal data.
Although the goal behind retrieval of personal information is to avoid “leaving anyone behind”
we must do so with great caution.¹ In an effort to strengthen the retrieval and distribution of
demographic data acknowledging basic human rights, the International Catholic Nurses’
Organization offers the following recommendations: (1) maintain and store personal data per
independent national laws, (2)) avoid global, involuntary use and storage of personal data, (3)
equip nurses with modern methods of data recording and (4) expand nursing educational
opportunities.

Maintain and store personal data per independent national laws. Biological information is
private and possessed by the individual. Nurses are obligated by the International Code of Ethics
for Nurses, to protect a person’s privacy and confidentiality.² The Universal Declaration of
Human Rights adopted by members of the United Nations (December, 1948) states, “No one
shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence....
Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks”.³
Numerous nations have International Privacy laws, including Bulgaria, Brazil, France, Mexico,
Russia, South Africa and the United States of America.⁴ Independent private national laws

¹ King, William. (2015, February 10). UN global goals will ‘leave no one behind’. *gbtimes*. Retrieved from
<http://gbtimes.com/world/un-global-goals-will-leave-no-one-behind>

² International Council of Nurses. (2012). The International Code of Ethics. Retrieved from
<http://www.icn.ch/who-we-are/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/>

³ United Nations. (1948, December). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

⁴ Information Shield. (2011). International privacy laws. Information Shield, Inc. Retrieved from

permit countries to collect a census of their population but are required to obtain an individual's consent prior to disclosing or transmitting "personal" data. Any entity seeking to breach the privacy of a nation's citizen should be considered an "arbitrary interference" since personal data is not relevant outside the local or national government.

Avoid global, involuntary use and storage of personal data. Some countries are using forms of biometric technology such as facial recognition and National ID Cards as a means to confirm a person's identity. Personal data including age, origin of birth, gender and a photograph is recorded and stored in a central database.⁵ This information can be retrieved and utilized for tracking or identifying a person in a crowd without the person's knowledge or consent, directly threatening basic human rights.

Equip nurses with modern methods of data recording. The World Health Organization (2014, May) reported that "globally, two-thirds (38 million) of 56 million annual deaths are still not registered. Information specific to birth and death rate is essential for the supply of adequate health care services".⁶ Statistics versus personal data should be recorded as a means of determining health trends of a population. Nurses can be instrumental in collecting data regarding births, deaths, illnesses and other health related issues utilized for aggregated statistics. Information can be recorded and transmitted in "real time" on hand held devices. This is possible due to improved internet access which includes 2 billion users in undeveloped countries reported by the International Communication Union, April 2016.⁷

Expand nursing educational opportunities. Globally, nurses deliver 90% of healthcare throughout a person's life span.⁸ The World Health Organization considers nurses on the "front line" of healthcare extending care to residents in remote villages as well as those in high risk war zones.⁹ A Shortage of nurses however continues to be a reality, especially in developing countries.¹⁰ In conclusion, we assert that to strengthen the collection and distribution of demographic data, it is imperative to (1) respect the personal and biological privacy laws that exists throughout the world, (2) assure consent is offered prior to recording and or transmitting personal data (3) expand the nursing workforce and schools of nursing as well as (4) provide hand held devices for nurses to record births and deaths, especially in developing countries.

Thank you from the members of the International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-Social Assistants. from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America

<http://www.informationshield.com/intprivacylaws.html>

⁵ Electronic Frontier Foundation. (n.d.). Defending your rights in the digital world. Retrieved from <https://www EFF.org/issues/national-ids>

⁶ World Health Organization. (2014 May). Civil registration: Why counting births and deaths is important. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs324/en/>

⁷ International Communication Union. (2016, April). Trends in telecommunication reform 2016: New edition flagship ICT regulatory report. *ITU*. Retrieved from http://www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/press_releases/2016/12.aspx#.VwqgfY-cE2x

⁸ Squires, A., White,J., & Sermeus, W. (2015) Quantity, quality, and relevance of the nursing workforce to patient outcomes. ICN Policy Brief , International Council of Nurses. Retrieved from www.icn.ch/

⁹ World Health Organization. (2008). Nursing and Midwifery progress report. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing_midwifery/NursingMidwiferyProgressReport.pdf

¹⁰ World Health Organization. (2008). Nursing and Midwifery progress report. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing_midwifery/NursingMidwiferyProgressReport.pdf