

GRADUATION CEREMONY “LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE”
ORGANISED BY NURSING ASSOCIATION ON 11 OCTOBER 2017

Honourable Anwar Husnoo, Minister of Health & Quality of Life

Mr. Ram Nowzadick, President Nursing Association

Representative of the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you for this graduation ceremony to reward Nurses who have successfully followed the course “Leadership for Change”. I thank the President and Managing Committee members of the Nursing Association for this invitation.

The organisation of such a course goes to the credit of the Nursing Association. In so doing, the Association is showing that it is not only a trade union which fights for the right and conditions of service of its members but it is also interested in their capacity building and Team building.

In May this year, upon the invitation of the Nursing Association to celebrate the International Nurses Day, I had the pleasure to address you on the very important role you, nurses, are playing in the health sector.

Indeed Nurses are engaged in the noble task of ensuring good health and of saving lives. You are in the profession not by chance but by choice. You have joined the profession to care for the people, for the nation. We cannot but agree with the

saying that “The wealth of a nation depends on the health of its population, and the health of the population depends on the nursing profession”.

In recent years, Nursing, in different parts of the world, has gone through several changes. The trends of the globalisation process in the contemporary society impose new and great challenges for Nursing in this 21st century. These challenges are due, mainly, to countless and fast changes in the political, economic, social, and cultural field with drastic effects on individual and collective health. As the population’s healthcare needs have changed, so too has the scope of practice for nurses. This has required a change in the education and training to ensure that nurses can take on new and complex roles.

Universal healthcare cannot happen without nurses, and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations cannot happen without nurses. This has led governments to recognise that an investment in health care is an investment in the economy and so investing in primary care, health promotion and disease prevention by nurses will improve the health of the population. Investment in healthcare is an investment in the health of the people, which means that healthy people can go to work, can provide for their families, pay their taxes and do not become a burden to society.

Time has come to empower our nurses to become leaders for change. It is not easy to make changes, and change doesn't come easily.

Nurses at all levels need strong leadership skills to contribute to patient safety and good health. Strong leadership is critical if the vision of a transformed health

care system is to be realised. The nursing profession must produce leaders throughout the health care system, who can serve as full partners with other health professionals and be accountable for their own contributions to delivering high-quality care while working collaboratively with leaders from other health professions.

Those involved in the health care system—nurses, physicians, patients, and others—play increasingly interdependent roles. Problems arise every day that do not have easy or singular solutions. Leaders who merely give directions and expect them to be followed will not succeed in this environment. What is needed is a style of leadership that involves working with others as full partners in a context of mutual respect and collaboration. A recent Gallup Poll has shown that this leadership style has been associated with improved patient outcomes, a reduction in medical errors, and less staff turnover.

Nurses now need the knowledge, strategies, strength to lead and manage in changing nursing and health services for the better; and to influence health policy towards healthier futures for all populations.

This is exactly the purpose of the “Leadership for Change course” spearheaded by the Nursing Association for the benefit of nurses and licensed by the International Council of Nurses (ICN).

During the period 2014/16, more than a hundred Senior Nurses, Charge Nurses and Ward Managers have followed this course which covered highly relevant topics like effective management, effective leadership, management of change,

communication, organizational culture, etc. Having followed this course you are now empowered to better understand health trends and issues, be more effective in organising, managing and leading. You will better understand the importance of effective communication, strategic thinking and planning, all of which will contribute to enhance your competence as a nurse, for the benefit of the patient.

All these knowledge, skills and attitudes will definitely prepare you to offer a quality service to the population. This course has provided you with the requisite skills to lobby for and assume a greater responsibility in the leadership and management of health care services, and will boost your participation in the healthcare policy-making process.

In closing I commend the Nursing Association in organising such courses which contribute to uplift the status of the nursing profession in Mauritius. I am sure you will be given all necessary support, be it financial or resources, to enable you to sustain your educational programme. To you all nurses, I want to acknowledge your commitment to high standards in your profession and in overcoming the challenges you face on a daily basis.

As far as financial assistance is concerned, I feel that if your Association makes a formal request to your parent Ministry and the request is justified by a well-worked out project proposal chances are it will be granted. The project must necessarily be geared towards improving the quality of service and the welfare of the patients. I can assure you of all the support you deserve.

Finally, my congratulations to all the graduants. I have great confidence in your ability to succeed in contributing significantly to the good health of the Mauritian nation. You have the science and not only the art of caring for people but the heart for caring for the people with love.