



The header banner features the logo of the Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing (OBJN) on the left, which includes a stylized eye icon and the text 'OBJN Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing'. To the right, the word 'ENGLISH' is written in large white letters against a background of a flag. Below this, the text 'Federal Fluminense University' is displayed in a dark teal box, and 'AURORA DE AFONSO COSTA NURSING SCHOOL' is shown in a light green box. On the right side of the banner, the logo for 'uff' (Universidade Federal Fluminense) is present, along with the text 'Professional Issues'.

## International nurses day 2004 NURSES: Working with the Poor; Against Poverty

### Message from ICN

*Dear Colleagues,*

Poverty is the greatest misery we face today. This is why ICN has chosen to focus on poverty for this year's IND theme. Some 1.2 billion people are living in extreme poverty; that is, on less than \$1 a day. This means they lack the basic necessities for a healthy life -- adequate food, water, clothing, shelter and health care. Additionally, up to 2.8 billion people are living on less than \$2 a day.

Poverty and poor health go hand-in-hand, with the poor sharing an unequal burden of ill health. The poorest 1.2 billion people bear two-thirds of the world's communicable disease, maternal and perinatal mortality, and nutritional deficiencies. The particular cruelty of poverty is its vicious circle, whereby people do not have access to health, education and other means to increase their income and to improve their health status. Yet without good health, a person's potential to

escape from poverty is severely weakened.

What can we as nurses do? We know that investing in education, health care and sound social policy can improve health outcomes. We also know that health is an asset, thus promoting and protecting it must be a key concern. This means that we must be sure we are educated about the determinants of health, about empowerment, and about working with communities and vulnerable groups to address their unique needs.

We can work to ensure the poor are treated with respect, and work to influence policies and programmes, ensuring they are designed with the poor and most vulnerable in mind. We can lobby for fair labour standards, safe work places, equal rights for women (who represent 70 per cent of the most poor), and lobby to ensure equity of access to health services.

Nurses are the most trusted of health professions. We can do much to work with and on behalf of poor people. We work with them to

ensure that their voices are heard, that they are included in decisions concerning them, and that the inequalities of access, employment, services, gender, ethnicity and race are addressed. Working side-by-side with clients, service providers, community leaders, policy makers and politicians we can do our part to reduce the plague of poverty.

Sincerely,

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Christine Hancock Judith A. Oulton

*President Chief Executive Officer*

Excerpt from:

ICN - International Council of Nurses. INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY 2004. NURSES: WORKING WITH THE POOR; AGAINST POVERTY - Information and Action Tool Kit. ISBN: 92-95005-96-1 Geneva (Switzerland), ICN, 2004. 58p.