

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE : TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2020

PRESIDENT PAYS TRIBUTE TO NURSES ON INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY

President Cyril Ramaphosa has today, International Nurses Day, paid tribute to South Africa's nurses for their critical contribution to the nation's wellbeing and called on communities to accord nurses the necessary gratitude and support.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The annual commemoration is organised by the International Council of Nurses.

The Council has dedicated the year 2020 to acknowledging nurses and midwives as leaders in society.

The President says the highly valued contribution of nurses to society has taken on exponential importance in the battle, in the country and around the world, against COVID-19.

The President says: "As a nation, we owe our wellbeing to the untiring commitment of nurses whose positive impact on our lives reaches beyond our physical health.

"Nurses are the frontline of our healthcare system and we appreciate the dedication with which they perform their duties in public and private hospitals and clinics; in schools; in mines; in pharmacies; in corporate health and wellness programmes; in non-governmental organisations; in faith-based organisations; in sports federations; as volunteers in different settings, and as neighbours who don't mind being woken up in the middle of the night when we need help.

"They provide comfort and counsel to the vulnerable and they are at our side from birth to the instant of death.

"More broadly, nurses are community-builders, mentors, counsellors and educators who provide psychosocial support, beyond the medical domain, to the communities in which they are based and are at the forefront of our fight against many social ills.

"Nurses are therefore central to our achievement of a better life for all South Africans.

“Nurses deserve our appreciation and gratitude and we must offer nurses the protection they need against a range of threats, from viruses to violence.

“Currently, nurses are placing themselves between our communities and the unseen enemy we face in COVID-19. We are humbled by their bravery, their hard work and their commitment to putting the interests of all South Africans before their own and those of their own families.

“Let us pause today to celebrate this invaluable and treasured cadre of our society and let us give them our full support and gratitude into the future.”

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