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President's Message

Boosting nursing cooperation for a healthy Silk Road[☆]

More than 2,000 years ago, the ancestors of the Chinese nation crossed the deserts and sailed the seas and, eventually, opened up the ancient Silk Road and started trade with countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa. The ancient Silk Road trade promoted the integration of Eastern and Western cultures and the exchanges between different nations, and drove the progression of human society.

Today, with the acceleration of globalization, people of all nations are more closely connected. We have become a community with a shared future, facing many challenges. In 2013, in order to better cope with global challenges and create new opportunities for development, China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative, based on the principles of cultural exchange, mutual understanding, shared benefits, and trust, and the creation of new opportunities for development.

Health issues are an important part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Adhering to the Silk Road spirit of “peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit”, the Chinese Nursing Association (CNA) hopes to cooperate with multiple countries to address global health problems and improve the health and well-being of all mankind.

1. Remarkable health achievements in China

2019 is the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over the past 70 years, with great support from the Party and government, China's health services have made remarkable progress. For example, the average life expectancy of the population increased from 35 years in 1950 to 77 years in 2018, the maternal mortality rate dropped from 1500 per 100,000 to 18.3 per 100,000, and the infant mortality rate dropped from 200 per 1000 to 6.1 per 1000. China's key health indicators are better than the average for middle- and high-income countries. The Global Ranking of Healthcare Access and Quality in the *Lancet* showed that China's position had risen from 190 in 1990 to 60 in 2015, and then to 48 in 2016. Thus, China has experienced extremely high levels of progress in healthcare, both in healthcare competency and quality. In recent years, in order to safeguard people's health across the whole lifespan, the government has upgraded the “Healthy China” initiative into a national strategy. In 2016 and 2019, the government issued several important policy documents, including the “*Healthy China 2030*” *Planning Outline* and “*Healthy China Action (2019–2030)*”, which have changed the

focus of China's health services from the treatment of disease to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The population's health has continued to improve and so has health equality.

The outstanding achievements of China's health services are inseparable from the efforts and dedication of all care providers. By the end of 2018, there were more than 4 million registered nurses in China, an increase of more than 100 times compared with the 37,800 registered nurses in 1950. Nearly 70% of nurses hold a college degree. Nursing services also extend from hospitals to community care, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, hospices for palliative care, and other institutions.

The integration of information technology into nursing services—including the development of intelligent nursing and the use of the Internet in nursing—has made nursing services more effective, efficient, safe, convenient, and able to meet the diverse needs of the population.

2. The Chinese Nursing Association makes outstanding contributions to the development of nursing in China

For a long time, the CNA has devoted itself to the development of China's healthcare and nursing with a keen sense of responsibility and mission. In 1909, the association (originally named Nurses' Association of China, NAC) was established in Guling (Kuling), Jiangxi Province, with only 13 members. In 1922, the NAC was admitted to the International Council of Nurses as the 11th full membership state. The founding of New China in 1949 brought opportunities for the development and expansion of the NAC. In 1964, the association was renamed the Chinese Nursing Association. With strong support from the government and the unremitting efforts of several generations of nurses, the CNA has developed into a top-ranking academic association in China, with 44 branches and more than one hundred thousand full members. The CNA continues to develop its values, mission, and vision, and has truly become an organizer and leader of Nursing in China.

In 2013, the CNA was readmitted by the International Council of Nurses as a full member and became deeply involved in innovations related to global nursing. In 2017, the CNA was granted the National Nurses Association Innovations Award by the International Council of Nurses.

As a pioneer of nursing education in China, the CNA regulated nursing education by establishing standards, publishing textbooks, providing unified courses, and managing the registration of nurses at the beginning of its founding. The undergraduate nursing education in China began in 1920 and was replaced by secondary vocational education in 1952. After advocacy by the CNA, undergraduate nursing education in China was restored in 1983.

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By 2004, an integrated nursing education system had been formed, including vocational education, junior college, undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees. Now, more than 100 colleges and universities have postgraduate nursing courses. The CNA also actively promoted the construction of a lifelong education system for nurses and cooperated with the government to issue a number of documents about continuing nursing education. In recent years, the CNA has provided training programmes for more than 10,000 specialty nurses, who have become the mainstay of the development of nursing disciplines in China.

As the leader of the development of nursing in China, the CNA focuses on promoting international academic exchange and domestic academic progress, by hosting annual national congresses. In recent years, more than 50 academic events were held annually in various forms. With rich content and diverse forms, the activities were deeply welcomed by nursing professionals in China. In order to benefit more nursing professionals, the CNA also launched an online conference platform for academic conferences. More than 50,000 participants online and offline took part in academic conferences run by the CNA this year.

At the same time, the CNA supports the work of specialists in the field of nursing to make full use of their expertise. Nearly 30 professional consensus and guidelines are released annually, which helps to improve the standardization, homogenization, and scientific level of China's nursing services. In addition, the CNA has also set up special funds and awards, such as the "CNA Science and Technology Award" and the "CNA Innovation and Invention Award" for nursing research projects, to encourage and recognize nursing professionals who develop cutting-edge nursing technology. The CNA has also established five academic journals on nursing in Chinese/English. Published in 1920, the *Quarterly Journal for Chinese Nurses* was the earliest bilingual comprehensive nursing publication in China, which, at that time, was very popular among domestic and foreign nurses. In 1954, the *Chinese Journal of Nursing* was officially launched, and it has consistently ranked first among China's nursing journals. Founded in 2004, the *Chinese Journal of Nursing Education* is the only journal on nursing education in China. In 2014, the *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* was launched in English. In 2019, the first academic journal on a nursing specialty in China, the *Chinese Journal of Emergency and Critical Care Nursing*, was approved for publication and will soon be launched.

As a promoter of nursing policies in China, the CNA plays an important role as a think tank and participates in the national top-level design of nursing policies, publishing documents with key suggestions and advice, such as the "Nurses' Regulations", "National Nursing Development Plan", and "Training Outline for Newly Recruited Nurses". In 2018, the CNA launched the "Investigation on the Implementation Status of the 'Nurses' Regulations' at the 10th Anniversary". More than 200,000 nurses were involved in the investigation, and the results were published in the form of a Bluebook, which provided an important basis for the country's future decisions.

As a provider of health promotion for the population, the CNA has led a wide range of nursing professionals to actively conduct a variety of health science popularization activities and strive to improve all people's health literacy. A Scientific Popularization Team consisting of 25 professional committees and nearly 200 nursing experts was established. Since 2018, the Scientific Popularization Team of the CNA has provided health promotion services to more than 700,000 people. Due to China's vast territory and large population, there are certain gaps in the nursing personnel, resource supply, service capacity, and service level in the eastern, central, and western regions. In order to promote health equity among different regions and the appropriate distribution of high-quality nursing resources, the CNA regularly provides specialists

to support the remote areas of the country to improve nursing professionals' skills.

To carry forward Florence Nightingale's Spirit, the CNA actively advocates for approaching nursing with a spirit of "humanity, fraternity, and dedication". Since 1983, 80 nursing professionals in China have been awarded Florence Nightingale Medal by the International Committee of the Red Cross. They are examples of achievement and pride in the field of nursing. The CNA helped to publicize their outstanding work and moral character. In the face of major natural disasters and public health emergencies at home and abroad, the CNA has always called on Chinese nursing professionals to join the frontline medical emergency services to demonstrate the spirit of Florence Nightingale through practical actions.

3. Boosting nursing cooperation for a healthy Silk Road

Deepening cooperation and sharing healthy life are important choices to ensure the development of human society. Faced with so many problems in the field of health, only by sharing wisdom and combining our strengths can we achieve sustainable development of health services.

In response to the shared global health challenges such as air pollution, climate change, infectious disease epidemics, non-communicable diseases, and mental health problems, the World Health Organization launched a new five-year strategic plan (*Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023*) in 2019, proposing the realization of the "triple billion" targets, i.e. by 2023, one billion more people benefitting from universal health coverage; one billion more people better protected from health emergencies; and one billion more people enjoying better health and wellbeing. Global healthcare providers must implement changes to meet these targets. Additionally, 2020 coincides with the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale and the WHO announced at the 72nd World Health Assembly that 2020 will be the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, which reflects the global recognition of the importance of nursing professionals and midwives.

In the past few years, in order to better promote the development of global nursing, the CNA has continuously worked to improve international cooperation and communication. The CNA has established a number of bilateral cooperative relationships with Canada, Germany, and the US. The CNA has also established a platform for the China–Japan–Korea Nursing Exchange and the BRICS Nursing Exchange. During this conference, the CNA and the nursing associations of 23 countries signed the Belt and Road memorandums of understanding for nursing cooperation.

In the future, the CNA hopes to further improve international cooperation, focusing on the following six issues. First, the CNA will actively promote academic development and strengthen links by building academic exchange platforms, developing professional practice standards, and ensuring cooperation between nursing journals in China. Second, the CNA will organize academic conferences, visits, and joint training to enhance academic exchanges. Third, the CNA will cooperate to promote the reform of nursing education, discuss the design of the nursing course and the evaluation of teaching quality. Fourth, the CNA will strengthen cooperation regarding enriching nursing theory, exploring technological innovation, and promoting the transformation of knowledge. Fifth, the CNA will actively respond to the aging of the population and strengthen communication regarding the development of nursing services for the aging population. Sixth, the CNA hopes to share experiences regarding improving the influence of nursing, and enhancing nursing professionals' participation in the top-level design of nursing development, so that the voice of nursing professionals is more eloquent!

As the saying goes, "If you want to go fast, walk alone; and if you

want to go far, walk together". Let us work together to promote the Belt and Road nursing cooperation so it becomes deeper, more stable, and longer lasting. In other words, let us work together to improve human health and build a more wonderful and healthier world!

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