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**Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing Hosts First Regional Meeting
with Key South East Asia and Pacific Rim Nurse Leaders**

Meeting convened by The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International

INDIANAPOLIS — The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) convened the inaugural regional meeting of the **Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON)**, 15-16 June 2015 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Korean Nurses Association (KNA). More than 50 key nurse leaders from the South East Asia/Pacific Rim region¹ were invited to participate in this historic event.

Sponsored by Pfizer, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, GAPFON is a catalyst for nurse leaders to work together and develop a unified voice and vision for the future of nursing and health care globally. According to **STTI President Dr. Hester Klopper**, “Nurse leaders from this region are committed to working collaboratively to ensure universal access to care within the framework of the World Health Organization (WHO) health architecture and United Nations (UN) post-2015 agenda.”

“I applaud GAPFON and STTI for convening the inaugural GAPFON regional meeting in Seoul, Republic of Korea, prior to the ICN’s Council of National Nurses Association meeting and Conference, which we are hosting,” said **KNA President Dr. Oksoo Kim**. “We are pleased to collaborate with GAPFON in a critical juncture in our history as we fight the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) outbreak. GAPFON will help all of us in our region be more prepared to meet the global health goals and challenges of the 21st Century.”

Dr. Suchitra Luangamornlert, first vice president of the Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council, stressed that, “This was an excellent gathering of the key nurse leaders in our region. We need to ensure our voice and vision is heard and that more representation is needed at all policy tables, particularly at the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) office. This is essential to meeting the global health challenges for the future in our region.”

GAPFON priority issues and health challenges

The Asia/Pacific nurse leaders confirmed that priority issues and action strategies must focus on:

- **policy;**

- **leadership;**
- **education/curriculum; and**
- **workforce/practice.**

In many settings, nurses and midwives are restricted from practicing to the full scope of their preparation and licensures. Removing these restrictions will allow nurses and midwives to care more comprehensively for patients, thus improving healthcare outcomes and reducing cost.

In addition to the identified priority issues, the Asia/Pacific nurse leaders identified public and global health challenges, including:

- **maternal and child health**
- **non-communicable diseases/chronic diseases**
- **disaster preparedness and emergency responses**
- **elderly care and mental health**

As noted by the participants, all of these issues are opportunities for nurses and midwives to join other health professions in achieving universal health coverage, the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Strategy for Health and Human Resources, and the future WHO Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery.

Tara Bhusal Pokharel, president of the Nursing Association of Nepal, commented, “This was an opportunity for me to represent my country, Nepal. We recently had a major earthquake disaster and having enough nurses must be ensured. GAPFON gives us hope for the world to hear our voice.”

“The Western Pacific Region faces many human resources for health (HRH) challenges,” said **Adjunct Professor Debra Thoms, CEO of the Australian College of Nursing**. “Nurses are the key providers of health care in a number of countries in our region. A number of the countries have also recognized the contribution of nurses through the appointment of chief nurses within their national governments. It is essential that nurses have a policy voice at the WHO WPRO level if we are to address HRH and health challenges now and into the future.”

GAPFON Chair Dr. Martha Hill, dean emerita, professor of Nursing, Medicine, and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, said, “We are very excited to have met with key nurses from the Asia Pacific Region to learn about their priority health needs and strategies to improve global health.”

During the next 13 months, GAPFON will hold additional regional meetings with key stakeholder groups, including representatives from multiple sectors around the globe, to obtain knowledge and social, economic, cultural, and political insight related to issues determined at this inaugural meeting. Data from these meetings

will provide the basis for an action plan with policy implications. GAPFON will analyze and prioritize key recommendations that address each of these challenges in a summary report, and will post these summary reports, along with the recommendations from subsequent regional meetings, at www.gapfon.org.

¹American Samoa, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Guam, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pitcairn Islands, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Takelau, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Wallis and Futuna.

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About the Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON)

The Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON) was convened by The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) to establish a voice and a vision for the future of nursing that will advance global health. GAPFON seeks to provide evidence on the value of nursing and to participate in and influence health policy, nursing leadership and practice, education, and the global health agenda. GAPFON is sponsored by Pfizer, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. For more information about GAPFON, visit www.gapfon.org.

About the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI)

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. Founded in 1922, STTI has more than 135,000 members in more than 85 countries. Members include practicing nurses, educators, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and others. STTI's 500 chapters are located at institutions of higher education throughout Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, England, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, the United States, and Wales. For more information about STTI, visit www.nursingsociety.org.