



The I International Congress on Community Nursing is being held, from the 21st to the 24th of September in the Municipal Palace of Congresses of Madrid (Campo de las Naciones). Over 1,200 nurses from all over the world are attending this event.

The Opening Event, which took place yesterday, 22nd of September, was presided by Ms Elena Salgado Méndez, Minister of Health Care.

Among other things, she underlined 'the work that the Ministry of Education and Science is carrying out, by studying the possibility of granting academic value to specialized nursing training within the European higher education space, as begun with the Bologna Declaration of 1999, thus facilitating access to PhD, after specialization has been completed.

She also pointed out that 'nowadays, the Spanish nursing profession is enjoying a well deserved prestige, both inside and outside our national boundaries. This prestige is based as much in the efficiency of our training model as in the motivation and human quality of professionals who, together with all other professionals, are the main asset of the Spanish Health Care system'.

She emphasized that 'both the Ministry and the Autonomous Communities are working to guarantee our system's equity, quality and sustainability. This endeavour would bear no fruit, however, without the daily effort and support of health care professionals and, very specially, of nurses'.

The Opening Conference was presented by Dr. Lis Wagner, Nursing and Midwives Adviser in the European Union Region of the World Health Organization.

Ms Esperanza Aguirre, President of the Community of Madrid, who had previously expressed that previous engagement would prevent her attendance during the Opening Event, arrived accompanied by Mr Manuel Lamela, the Regional Minister of Health Care, and addressed a few words of welcome to the congress attendants.

The President of the Community of Madrid expressed that '... Primary Care Nurses are professionals that the citizens value highly...' and that, 'from the point of view of the Madrid Health Care System, Nurses are one of the most strategic groups, because of the role they develop in health care programmes...'. She pointed out that the validity of the concept of primary care organized into teams, and the focus on integral care goes beyond mere isolated care.

After the Congress was formally opened, the first Round Table begun, under the name of 'Health care needs depending on the populations'. Participants

were Ms M<sup>a</sup> Nubia Romero (Professor, Nursing College, Pedagogical and Technological University of Colombia); Ms Rachel Sector (Community Nursing Consultant, Honorary Professor at the University of Alicante) and Mr Joan Carles Contel (Assistant, Primary Care Nursing at the Catalonian Health Care Institute, Associated Professor at the University of Barcelona. Home care expert).

In their presentations, the speakers underlined:

The Community Nursing profession understand that their logic when caring is addressed to preparing people to face the many new experiences vis a vis their health-illness process, as well as to fostering the skills, beliefs, knowledge and self-care that will be beneficial for the evolution of their health problems.

In order to develop their caring activities, Community Nursing should develop the care, beliefs and traditional practices of the population.

Community Nursing has consolidated its professional leadership in Home Care, whose organizational models are adapting themselves to social changes in the population.

Before the Opening Event, the debating table about 'The development of Community Nursing since Alma-Ata' was held. Participants were Linda Lathan, President of the Irish Practice Nurses Association and Manuel López Morales, President of the Federation of Community Nursing and Primary Care Associations (FAECAP).

The President of FAECAP emphasized that, within the present framework of professional diversity, the need of establishing mutual help links at international level is now more pertinent than ever before.

He added that the modification of the professional role of Community Nursing has become essential, and in order to achieve this, it will have to increase its resolution capacity through prescriptions in its field of competence, as well as improve the population's accessibility and take up Community Health Care leadership.