



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY NURSING PROGRAM (NAUNP)

*Scholarship for Excellence in Nursing Practice*

CAC Reg. No: 182545

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### SOUTH WEST

**Prof Prisca Olabisi Adejumo,**  
Faculty of Nursing,  
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## A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A 5-DAY SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE AND GENERAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY NURSING PROGRAM (NAUNP).

**NAUNP-LAGOS 2026, 16<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026.**

**THEME:** STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR NURSING EDUCATION AND PRACTICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY (NAUNP-LAGOS 2026).

## I. PREAMBLE

The National Association of University Nursing Program (NAUNP) is the forum for all academic and other teaching staff in Nigerian Universities that transformed from being the Committee of Heads of Department of Nursing in Nigeria Universities (COHEDNUR) inaugurated on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1999. The Association with the new name (NAUNP) was registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Over the years of the existence of the Association, series of conferences and training workshops for knowledge updates, capacity enhancements of the members and support for member institutions have been done.

The association held a 5-day scientific conference and its general meeting adopting the hybrid mode with the theme "*Strengthening Collaboration and Partnership for Strategic Leadership and Human Resource Development for Nursing Education and Practice in the 21st Century,*" between 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the Old Great Hall at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Lagos. The conference featured a high-level opening ceremony attended by members and dignitaries drawn locally, nationally and internationally, the keynote presentation and six other plenary papers, scientific sessions with researchers drawn from 37 Universities presenting some of their research findings.

The conference opened on the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2026, with attendance of dignitaries from academia across disciplines as well as partners, including the Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Prof. Folashade Ogunsola, represented by the Provost of the College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Professor Ademola Ayodele Oremosu the Registrar/CEO, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, Dr Ndagi Alhassan, Comrade Orolu Sesan, the Representative of the President of the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives, Comrade Haruna Mamman.



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Others present at the opening ceremony were the Deans of Faculties from the College of Medicine, the Director of Nursing Services, Ministry of Health, Lagos State, Mrs. Olusola Aketi, representatives of national and international partners of the Association, including LearnFlo, Golden Lamp Leadership Initiative, Lecturio GmbH. Goodwill messages were also delivered on behalf of the National president of the University Graduate of Nursing Science Association, Nurse Opeyemi I. Ojo and the Acting Director of Nursing Services, Federal Ministry of Health,

The keynote address, on the theme of the Conference by Prof. Lydia Aziato, Vice Chancellor, University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), Ho, Ghana was a high point of the opening session. In addition to the expository keynote, six (6) other Professors of Nursing drawn from Nigeria, South Africa and United States of America presented six (6) plenary papers focusing on the diverse subthemes of the conference. The conference also had scientific sessions with forty-five presentations from 32 universities across the country covering empirical and articulate and critical review of titles covering all aspects of the sub-themes and other critical areas of nursing and healthcare. Overall 147 participants from many Universities across Nigeria and other Countries registered for the Conference. Delegates addressed the standardization of nursing education and practice, raising critical concerns regarding the alignment of academic qualifications with professional practice. Three organizations partnering with NAUNP, Lecturio GmbH and The Golden Lamp Leadership Initiatives and LearnFlo also had presentations in three of three critical areas of interest that they are collaborating with the Association. These are in the areas of digital innovations, research support frameworks to stimulate participants on the state-of-the-art application of technology by faculty, and the enhancement of nursing education outcomes. Interactive sessions focused on mitigating the "Japa" syndrome through improved retention strategies and welfare advocacy. Key deliberations centred on bridging the theory-practice gap via robust clinical preceptorship and strengthening the NAUNP-NMCN-NUC regulatory partnership.

A summary of the interactions from papers presented and sessions informed the following observations, conclusions, and recommendations, as agreed upon by the participants in the conference, for the next steps and implementation.

## II. OBSERVATIONS

The following health system, nursing education, and practice challenges and issues were identified as strategic for the promotion of excellence in nursing and midwifery education and practice for optimal patient outcome and quality of nursing and midwifery care in Nigeria:

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**North East:** Dr Adamu Alhaji, Department of Nursing Science, Federal University of Health Science, Azare, Bauchi State (08065499113)

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1. **Educational and Clinical Challenges:** The Association has observed a persistent resistance to pedagogical change among many nursing academics, who struggle to transition from traditional, authoritarian models to collaborative, 21st-century facilitation approaches.
2. **Strategic Leadership and Governance** - The Association identifies a significant lack of shared values and clear disciplinary vision among nurse academics and clinical counterparts. The vision and mission statements often contained in curricula of nursing institutions have not served as guiding principles for both teaching and clinical supervision for clinical placement. This often results in wide theory-practice gaps.
3. A non-collegial relationship between nurse leaders (termed *Vice Syndrome*), especially between heads and their deputies, has been observed. This seems to have created further gaps in delivery of quality nursing care and has also negatively affected leadership mentorship, particularly among nurse clinicians.
4. The Association also has observed the rapid increase in the number of nursing training institutions without corresponding inputs (infrastructural, workforce considering number and capacity) and processes. The observed rapid increase in educational institutions approved to run nursing programmes and consequent pressure on both human and other resources could be counterproductive, thereby compromising standards, and thus the concern prompting actions by the Association
5. **Political and Digital Dynamics - The Invisibility and Data Crisis:** Nursing leadership continues to face "Political Invisibility," exhibiting suboptimal navigation of workplace politics and media systems. This lack of "vantage positioning" prevents the profession from securing its rightful place in healthcare governance and policy-making. Furthermore, the profession suffers from "Data and Evidence Obscurity," where shortage and uncoordinated indigenous, evidence-based research limits our ability to advocate for systemic improvements. These gaps necessitate a shift toward Resourcefulness Mindset, Development of National Database and adoption of Collaborative and Coordinated Institutional Leadership across Educational, Clinical Site and other Professional Associations Leadership while eschewing adoption of Lifelong Learning and High Tech for capacity building.
6. These observations form the basis for immediate action for strategic collaboration with National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives to drive Systemic Improvement across the Nigerian Healthcare Sector.



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7. **Curricular Reforms/Transformation:** The Bachelor of Nursing Science Degree was specially designed to meet health and healthcare needs and challenges of Nigeria taking cognizance of international standards. The programme continues to be reviewed to meet changing national, regional and global health challenges, healthcare needs and problems. In the same light, the need to reform the postgraduate (PG) curricula that eschew high quality access to healthcare informed the NAUNP and NMCN's collaboration that resulted in the development of unified postgraduate education with expanded skills and scope of practice in diverse service areas. Delegates collectively observed that the revised and reformed PG curricula, as reported, align with service needs considering various clinical specializations along the clinical specialists and the advanced practitioner's models to be fully implanted across Nigeria, with instructional redesign along the line and beyond the existing post-basic programmes currently available in Nigeria.
8. **Human Resource and Training Challenges:** Delegates at the conference appreciated the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria to mitigate the burden and consequences of massive migration of nurses in clinical practice and academia. However, the rapid increase in number of educational institutions offering nursing in Nigeria to quickly increase graduates has also posed critical challenges for infrastructural and human resource in nursing education that cannot be overlooked. The Association, working with all stakeholders, is encouraged to facilitate collaboration while evolving innovative interventions to meet these needs without compromising quality and high standard in the teaching-learning and clinical learning for students. Again, delegates noted that Nigeria, though not the only country suffering from the brain-drain syndrome, needs to address the systemic and policy-driven pull factors that fuel the catastrophic loss of skilled faculty and practitioners to migration. This underscores the need for senior faculty members to be more intentional and engaging in the teaching of foundational nursing courses.  
The delegates also commended the new initiative of government for the approval of centralized deployment of intern nurses as to ensure that all graduates promptly get placements. However, other critical challenges that may be associated with this initiative must be attended to promptly.
7. **Policy Advocacy and Lobbying:** There is a notable gap in concerted lobbying and advocacy efforts to influence policymakers and prospective bills affecting nursing education.

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8. **Educational Silos:** Healthcare professions in Nigeria are currently taught in silos, hindering contact, exchange of ideas, and the development of team spirit among health-related disciplines.
9. **Working Session:** The national working committee on Quality Assurance and Ethical Standards, in addition to the above observations, reported the readiness and commitment of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria and other stakeholders to ensure quality Nursing Education and practice.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. Reorienting the Leadership Mindset

- **Adopting "Resourcefulness":** The Association calls for a shift from a "lamentation mindset" to a "resourcefulness mindset," viewing obstacles as learning opportunities and leveraging limited assets creatively to overcome persistent challenges in nursing education and the health system.
- **Transformational Leadership:** NAUNP must lead the transformation change through focused capacity building to prepare future nurses for dynamic healthcare environments. Nurse leaders should adopt trusting, enabling, and strategic leadership styles that move human resources from a "raw/weak" status to one that is desirable and attainable through trust, character, and competence.
- **Ethical Strengthening:** NAUNP is mandated to facilitate ethical strengthening of leadership and ensure technological enhancement for better performance in human interactions across all levels.

#### 2. Structural and Regulatory Reforms

- **Addressing the "Vice Syndrome":** It is recommended that nursing departments and units implement collaborative administration models to bridge the gap between heads and team members, ensuring a "Unity of Purpose" and corporate cohesion.
- **Pragmatic Regulatory Adherence:** All stakeholders must be committed to strict compliance with implementation of university-based and NMCN regulatory guidelines, resisting political or economic pressures to compromise academic integrity.
- **Sustained Commitment:** There should be a sustained commitment to faculty development, infrastructure investment, and cultural change to improve nursing education and practice.



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### 3. Professional Development and Advocacy

- **Structured Training & Lifelong Learning:** NAUNP in collaboration with the NMCN should develop structured training programs with leadership modules also embedded directly into nursing curricula. Nurses must adopt lifelong learning beyond clinical skills, including digital literacy, critical appraisal of new knowledge, and engagement in emerging technologies.
  - **Targeted Leadership Training:** The Association shall promote short, self-directed courses and funded fellowship programs focused on the "Leadership Competency Framework" and nursing economics.
  - **Governance Inclusion & Politicking:** Nurses must move away from a distaste for politics and embrace strategic politicking and mentoring. Healthcare governance must actively involve nurses in the policy-making process, using organizational politics and media communication ("A Voice to Lead") to enhance the public rating and value of the profession.
  - **Evidence-Based Practice:** There must be a deliberate move toward continuous, evidence-driven reform in both undergraduate and graduate nursing curricula to ensure they are "purpose-built."
9. **A Sustained Commitment to Faculty Development** is the pathway to **Improved Workforce Dynamics**. This necessitates the mandatory resolution that all academic staff **MUST** participate in the series of Faculty Development Programmes and have a **Clinical Practice Outlet**, effectively bridging the theory-practice gap and ensuring that graduate nurses are "purpose-built" for clinical excellence. Thus, Academic-Practice Partnership will foster collaboration between lecturers and clinicians to utilise research outputs to drive evidence-based practice.

### IV. OUTCOME EXPECTATIONS

The implementation of these recommendations is expected to result in:

- **Robust Education System:** A functional nursing education system focused on and measured by quality patient outcomes.
- **Improved Workforce Dynamics:** Enhanced staff recruitment, preparation, and retention frameworks.

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- **Empowered Leadership:** The emergence of stronger leaders following the strengthening of ethical consciousness, reorientation, and trust.
- **Systemic Improvement:** A generally improved and more resilient health system that will facilitate better access to health care for the population.

## V. KEY RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION POINTS

- **Standardization:** NAUNP and NMCN will synchronize activities to ensure academic progress is tied to the recognized levels of professional development.
- **Clinical Engagement:** All academic staff MUST have clinical outlets to bridge the theory-practice gap.
- **Accountability:** NAUNP will work with NUC, NMCN and NANNM to hold non-responsive leaders accountable.
- **NANNM Integration:** Mandate all university nurse academics to become active, dues-paying members of the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM).

## VI. APPRECIATION

The Association expresses its profound gratitude to the Vice Chancellor University of Lagos and the Provost of the College of Medicine for hosting this historic gathering. The Communiqué Drafting Committee specifically thank the President, other EXCO members, and all Members of the Association for their contributions and support.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Nurse leaders are critical in driving healthcare transformation. There is an urgent need to blend leadership with management skills. Nursing education and practice MUST be strengthened through collaboration, partnership and by embracing innovation and system excellence to shape high-quality, sustainable care. Capacity building at all levels is essential to keep pace with changing pedagogy and technology. Strengthening Quality Assurance (QA) is a critical investment in health system resilience, positioning nurses as clinicians, leaders, researchers, and policy actors. This requires integrated investments in QA systems, leadership, governance, and competency-based, population-focused curricula. NAUNP-LAGOS 2026 concludes that strategic leadership is the indispensable ingredient for the survival of nursing in the 21st century.



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By aligning our actions with the core philosophy of nursing and fostering a culture of collaboration, support and high performance, the Association is committed to reinventing nursing education and practice in Nigeria, with utmost reverence for patient-centred care and improved healthcare outcomes.

## VIII. COMMUNIQUE DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

1. Professor E. E. Anyebe	0803 642 2771	Chairman
2. Professor Clara Agbedia	0803 381 4530	Member
3. Professor Anita Lukong	0803 282 9978	Member
4. Lt. Col. AS Isah	0703 2631415	Member
5. Dr. I. Y. Ademuyiwa	0805 207 4063	Member
6. Mr. Kazeem A. Ayinla	0806 657 9575	Secretary

Chairman, Communique Group

Secretary, Communique Group

Professor Omolola Irinoye

*National President, NAUNP*

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