

Second Midwifery Symposium

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Laura Laski

- Welcome you all to the 2nd Global Midwifery Symposium. We have with us today over 250 midwives, programme managers and policy makers from over 60 countries from around the world. We have assembled here to share our experiences in strengthening midwifery services, discuss challenges we are facing in improving access, accessibility, acceptability of services; to discuss quality of care issues and most importantly to discuss innovative solutions in addressing all these challenges by using latest technologies.
- The last Symposium was organized in collaboration with 8 partners but this Symposium has been the joint effort of 28 global partners on midwifery!! And we are very proud of this.
- Since the last Symposium that was held in 2010 in Washington DC at the previous Women Deliver, much progress has been noted:
 - UNFPA pledged at the last Symposium that together with partners, we would produce the necessary evidence base that investing in midwifery pays. We lived up to it and produced the first ever State of the World's Midwifery Report in record one year's time in collaboration with 30 partners.
 - The findings of this report were widely disseminated globally. As a result over 35 countries have pledged to make major investments in strengthening midwifery towards the SG's Every Woman Every Child Strategy.
 - The UNFPA/ICM programme has expanded to 30 countries
 - Midwifery workforce assessments are ongoing in 8 countries with the highest maternal mortality under a High Burden Country Initiative launched in 2011.
 - UNFPA has launched a major partnership with technology giant Intel in collaboration with WHO and Jhpiego to produce highly innovative e-learning modules which would help improve skills and capacities of frontline healthworkers and midwives and increase the number of well trained service providers.
 - ICM has launched global standards in midwifery education and regulation.

These are no small achievements. It is time to take stock and move forward with renewed energy and joint commitment as we still have a long way to cover in order to achieve the MDG 4 and 5 targets. But we can make a difference and save the lives of thousands of women who die in childbirth and their newborns by investing in quality midwifery services and building competent midwives.

With these words, I'd like to once again welcome you all to the Second global Midwifery Symposium.