



Second Global Midwifery Symposium Strengthening Quality Midwifery Care: Making Strides, Addressing Challenges 26-27 May 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



By 2015, the lives of 3.6 million women and newborn could be saved by a skilled, competent midwife, supported by functional services – averting two thirds of maternal and newborn deaths.



We, the Global Midwifery Symposium participants declare our commitment to champion the provision of widely available, accessible, acceptable and high quality midwifery services – the theme for the State of the World’s Midwifery 2014. To optimise reproductive, maternal and newborn health outcomes, we call upon governments, public and private sector partners to:



- **Invest.** Increase financial and in-kind investments in midwives, the midwifery workforce and midwifery services in order to accelerate progress towards the MDGs and the post 2015 development agenda on health and to expand universal access to reproductive health, including family planning
- **Educate.** Invest in competency-based, high quality, technologically innovative education programs and infrastructure that result in fully skilled and competent midwives
- **Deploy in the right places.** Ensure that midwives are effectively recruited, deployed, and supported to work in the communities that need them most
- **Be woman centred.** Work with care providers, women and communities to promote and provide sensitive, respectful, women-centred care in communities and facilities
- **Regulate.** Ensure regulation and licensing so that midwives are authorized and supported to provide the full range of evidence-based maternal and newborn health services that they are skilled and competent to deliver
- **Support.** Support midwives' associations, nurses and midwives associations and other organizations at the national, regional and international levels that advocate for and strengthen midwifery services and practice
- **Improve the evidence.** Enhance data collection and the evidence-base for midwifery and identify actions to address the context-specific barriers to midwifery services within countries



Since 2010, 46 lower income countries have pledged to increase coverage of midwifery services and one in three focus on midwives as part of their commitments to the UN Secretary-General’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health and the *Every Woman Every Child* movement. Significant progress has been made toward meeting MDG 4 and 5, and 6 but sustained momentum is required to end preventable deaths of women and their newborn.



In June 2010, midwives, other health professionals, countries, and development partners called the world's attention to the essential role that midwives play in providing the continuum of care for pregnant women and their newborn. This unprecedented call to action led to the research and launch of the *State of the World's Midwifery 2011* (SOWMy 2011), the H4+ High Burden Countries Initiative (HBCI) for the midwifery workforce, the Lancet series on Midwifery, which will be published shortly and the publication of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM, 2011) global standards, competencies and tools for midwifery education, regulation and association development.



There are still major challenges to the **availability** of the midwifery workforce and midwifery services in countries with the greatest needs. Midwifery remains largely **inaccessible**, with the most urgent need in rural communities. Many midwives continue to work in health systems and services that do not provide the respectful care found **acceptable** to women and their families. In many countries, accreditation, regulatory and licensing processes remain insufficient to ensure high **quality** midwifery education, practice, continued professional development and supportive supervision. Furthermore, paucity of financial resources and accountability mechanisms reduce the quality of care and its effective coverage. Global partners must promote efforts that will make midwifery services widely **available, accessible, acceptable** and of the highest **quality**. This will maximize the health of women, their newborn and their families.



Declared on this 27th day of May 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at the second Global Midwifery Symposium by representatives of the organisations on this declaration.

