



International Confederation of Midwives NEWS RELEASE

350,000 more midwives needed to reduce unnecessary deaths and injury in childbirth

The world needs Midwives now more than ever!

As the world's midwives mark International Day of the Midwife on 5 May, the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), is calling on world leaders to allocate more resources for midwives.

The upcoming G8 meeting in Canada will be highlighting the need to reduce maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality, globally. The midwifery workforce has been identified as essential to achieve this goal. "Midwives help save the lives of mothers and their newborn and without more midwives over half a million women will continue to die needlessly from pregnancy related complication each year", said ICM President Bridget Lynch.

ICM is calling on governments to strengthen midwifery worldwide, as midwives can help prevent up to 90% of maternal deaths when they are supported to provide basic life-saving skills in functioning health systems.

The International Confederation of Midwives says it is an 'international scandal' that one woman dies every minute of every day because she is pregnant, especially when most deaths are preventable. ICM President Bridget Lynch added "The provision of an extra 350,000 midwives worldwide is even more urgent when we consider that every year 1.5 million newborns die within the first 24 hours of life and millions of women suffer long lasting disability because they do not have access to basic healthcare during childbirth."

International Day of the Midwife was established to raise awareness of the role of midwives in countries worldwide. This year ICM's global partners are joining their 96 member associations to highlight the midwifery workforce. In May the White Ribbon Alliance and the Maternal Mortality Campaign are launching a "Midwives are Super Heroes" campaign and Save the Children is releasing its annual report "State of the World's Mothers", which recognizes the role of midwives in saving newborn lives in low resource countries.

In addition, the WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank are hosting a global Midwifery Symposium in Washington DC in June. This meeting will bring together global partners to strengthen the role of midwives in promoting and protecting maternal and newborn health globally.

"This year marks a significant recognition of the absolute necessity to grow a strong global midwifery workforce" said ICM president, Bridget Lynch. "Strengthening midwifery must be a priority for all governments of the world if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The world needs midwives now more than ever!"

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