The State of the World’s Midwifery 2011

“Delivering health, saving lives”

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The State of the World’s Midwifery Report was presented at the Triennial Congress of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) in Durban, South Africa, 20 June 2011.


The 58 countries that are the focus of the report include those identified in the UNSG’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health plus others with high maternal and newborn mortality.
Why this report?

- 350,000 women die while pregnant or giving birth each year – as do two million newborns.

- Many of these lives could be saved if skilled health care providers were attending all deliveries.

- Follow-up to the Global Symposium on Strengthening Midwifery at Women Deliver, held in Washington in 2010.
Aim of the report

1. Examine the **number and distribution** of health professionals involved in the delivery of midwifery services

2. Explore **challenges and emerging issues** related to health policies, education, regulation, professional associations and external aid, and that affect the quality of midwifery services

3. Consider **global issues** affecting human resources for health

4. Encourage **investments** in scaling-up of midwifery services, as well as “skilling-up” the providers
What are the main findings?

The State of the World’s Midwifery 2011, confirms that pregnant women, mothers and babies are still dying, partly because the world lacks quality midwifery services, and that without additional midwives, unnecessary deaths and disabilities will continue to be a fact of life.
Key findings...

• Midwives are **distributed unevenly within countries**, so that those who need midwives the most – the poor in remote areas – are often the most underserved.

• Lack of standardization and regulation of midwifery services, insufficient midwifery education and training and **poor skill levels**.
Key findings... Con’t

• Of the 58 countries surveyed, 20 have enough midwives, and could meet the MDG5 target if the midwifery workforce were in the right place.

• In the 38 remaining countries, at least 112,000 more midwives are needed to achieve the MDG 5 target of 95 per cent coverage of births by a skilled attendant by 2015.

(2005 World Health Report estimated that, globally, 350,000 midwives must be trained by 2015 in addition to those already working on the ground)
Key findings... Con’t.

• Among these 38 countries, 22 countries will have to **double** their midwifery workforce by 2015, seven will have to **triple** or **quadruple** it, and nine countries will need to increase midwives **by a factor of 6 to 15**.

• Midwives are not distributed evenly within countries: worst off are **rural and remote areas**.

• Working conditions in rural areas are difficult, so facilities **struggle to retain** midwives and other skilled health care staff.
Next steps?

Midwifery is an important profession, one that saves lives, and Governments should recognize it as such and work to ensure that:

- Trained midwives are adequately distributed across countries
- proper standards and regulation are in place and that education curricula are harmonized and modernized
- every effort is made to retain midwives in the country and in the areas where they are needed most.
Recommended actions

• The report makes specific recommendations to governments, regulatory bodies, educational institutions, professional associations to help remedy these problems and reinforce the status of midwifery in the 58 countries surveyed.

• It also recommends specific actions for international organizations, global partnerships, donors and NGOs
Recommended actions (for people like us...)

- Support efforts to **scale-up midwifery services and measure results**
- Advocate for inclusion of **stronger midwifery services** with improved competencies and quality of care in health sector strategies, policies and plans
- Support **quality and capacity of training institutions**
- Provide financial and in-kind support for **midwives professional associations** and **exchanges of knowledge and good practices**
- Encourage a **global agenda for midwifery research** and support its implementation at country level
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www.stateoftheworldsmidwifery.com
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