ICM Board June 2007

Board members attended a full three days of meetings over 23–25 June, with a packed business agenda, but also a number of opportunities to see more of the Netherlands and to meet some of the people who are influential in the ICM’s host country. The evening of Friday 22 June saw a reception held at the new ICM offices, where Board members and staff had the chance to talk with guests who came from the Dutch parliament and government departments.

Organisational consultant Thomas Lewinsky attended a number of the Board sessions to help guide discussion around governance and constitutional issues, as well as potential amendment of the vision and mission. New proposed versions will be debated by the full Council meeting in 2008.

Reports from ICM staff about membership were extremely positive, with six new associations received into membership over the past year and communication with at least 16 more, from every region of the world, who had expressed interest in joining the Confederation. Also encouraging to hear was that many associations are holding national or regional conferences, some of which have been attended by Board members.

Council meeting 2007

The first Council meeting under the new constitution, which requires an annual – rather than triennial – meeting, was held during the Board meeting. Member associations were invited to register their vote by proxy, but a small number of delegates - from the Royal Dutch Association of Midwives and from the Asociación Española de Matronas - chose to attend in person and were warmly welcomed to the short formal procedure.

A quorum (minimum number) of members is required for the meeting to be valid and this is equivalent to one quarter of the total number of members (93). In fact 42 written proxy votes were received so the quorum was exceeded.

The only major item on the Council agenda was the adoption of the ICM 2006 Annual Report and Audited Accounts, and this was agreed by an overwhelming majority.

ICM Director Judi Brown thanked all those who had been involved in making the new Council arrangement a success.

Aimón Sánchez-Molinero, the delegate from the Spanish association, wrote afterwards: ‘El día 23 de Junio de 2007, tuve la oportunidad de acudir a la Reunión Anual del Consejo de la ICM, como delegada de la Asociación Española de Matronas. Era una reunión corta pero interesante, con el fin de votar para aprobar los estados de cuentas del 2006, y en la que la gran mayoría de las asociaciones miembros votaron por poderes. Aun así, todos los miembros de la Junta se presentaron para darnos la bienvenida a las delegadas presentes, antes de realizar la votación y el recuento. Pero para mi sorpresa, tras la votación, tanto la Directora, como la presidenta, me invitaron amablemente a asistir a la sesión de tarde de la reunión de la Junta de la ICM, a la que habitualmente no asisten los delegados. Yo acepté encantada la invitación, y fue para mí un descubrimiento el presenciar una sesión de trabajo de este grupo de matronas de todas las regiones del mundo, definiendo caminos, consensuando ideas y tomando las mejores decisiones posibles. Matronas experimentadas, implicadas, esforzadas, inteligentes y amables que ponen toda su mente y sus valores en marcha para conseguir los objetivos, sin perder la sonrisa ni las ganas de trabajar, por duros y complicados que sean los temas que se abordan.

Observé que, paradójicamente, los problemas y los retos a nivel mundial son de alguna manera “similares” a los que nos encontramos a nivel local, salvando por supuesto las diferencias económicas y culturales de las regiones, y sin embargo sentí que es posible trabajar unidas en la misma dirección. El que se refleje la realidad, con toda su complejidad, en una reunión como ésta, es fundamental para que las decisiones y el trabajo de la ICM tengan sentido para todas y cada una de las matronas del mundo, como tuvieron sentido para mí en esas pocas horas en las que tuve la posibilidad de compartir.
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World Population Day – UNFPA action focuses on fathers

The poster above and similar images urging men to look after their pregnant wives, educate their daughters and share in parenting, were launched by the UNFPA for World Population Day on 11 July 2007.

The UNFPA pointed out that men are very often involved in deciding:

• how much of the budget can be spent on healthcare for a pregnant women
• whether their daughters will marry young or have a longer education
• and many other factors which affect girls’ and women’s lives and wellbeing.

Men are therefore urged to be well informed and responsible in their decisions on these matters which shape the future of the family and community.

More from www.unfpa.org/wpd/

Con estas oportunidad, me di cuenta de lo necesaria que es la existencia de un organismo como la ICM, eficaz en su trabajo y con buen intercambio de información, que se haga eco de todas estas situaciones y necesidades tanto de la profesión de matrona, como de las mujeres en todo el mundo, pues ambas van intrínsecamente unidas. Salí de esa reunión con la ilusión de seguir trabajando día a día por mejorar la atención a las mujeres y a sus familias y luchando por la profesión de matrona (y orgullosa de serlo!), siguiendo ese impulso que a nivel mundial la ICM quiere sostener, y al que nosotros, a nuestro nivel local o regional, debemos contribuir, para que todo esto funcione y se cumplan esa “Visión y Misión” de la ICM, de cuya redacción fui testigo privilegiado.

Gracias a todos los miembros de la Junta de la ICM por proporcionarme esta oportunidad, y mis más sinceras felicitaciones por el trabajo que están realizando.”

(On 23 June I had the opportunity to attend the annual ICM Council meeting, as delegate of the Asociación Española de Matronas. It was a short but interesting meeting, with the aim of adopting the 2006 accounts, which were agreed by the majority of members. All members of the Board welcomed the delegates present, before finalising the vote.

To my surprise, after the vote, the Director and President of ICM kindly invited me to stay for the following part of the Board meeting, which Council delegates do not normally attend. I willingly accepted the invitation to be present at this session where midwives from all regions of the world were reaching consensus on major decisions. I observed that, paradoxically, the issues at global level are in a way similar to those we encounter locally, in spite of the cultural and economic differences among the regions. This helped me to understand the need for the existence of a body like the

ICM, effecting good exchange of information and aiming to deal with all the issues of the midwifery profession, which – like the women of the world – has an intrinsic unity. I saw how it works day by day to raise awareness of the needs of women and families, and of midwives. Thank you to the members of the Board for extending me this opportunity to me, and my sincere congratulations for the work which they achieve.)

Midwives achieve legal breakthrough in USA

News from ICM member, the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), came in August to say that the US House of Representatives passed the ‘Children’s Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007’, which expands health care coverage to pregnant women and their children, and addresses a long-standing inequity in reimbursement for services of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs). The ACNM is proud to have endorsed this important legislation and worked hard for its passage.

ACNM President Kitty Ernst said, ‘The legislation will ensure that many of our nation’s uninsured children have access to vital health care coverage through the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. It will also improve access to care for children in underserved areas, help reduce minority health disparities, and protect the Medicare program for the long term.

ACNM especially applauds the provision in the bill eliminating payment limits for CNM services. Under the new law, CNMs would join the ranks of other health professionals already receiving 100% reimbursement for their services under Medicare, including physicians, nurse-anesthetists, audiologists and therapists.

“Expanded access to midwifery care in other countries has produced better outcomes at lower cost and is supported in this country by 80 years of outcomes research on midwifery care,” Ernst noted. “Reports … from both the public and private sector also point to the important role that midwives can play in reducing infant mortality, unnecessary cesarean sections, and routine medical interventions in the normal process of childbirth.”

More information from the ACNM website www.midwife.org