HEALTH OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN DISASTERS

BACKGROUND
Natural and/or human-induced disasters threaten the safety and the health of women, their newborn and their families. They may cause short-, medium- and long-term health problems. Disasters not only have serious implications where they have occurred, but may lead to various health hazards in other countries/areas as well.

The ICM is concerned about the collapse of social systems and the consequent negative impact on health that may occur as a result of disasters. The ICM recognizes a need to strengthen the preparation of midwives to deal with disasters in order to mitigate their effects. While providing women, babies and families with the care needed to restore, maintain and improve health after a disaster; midwives should work with other healthcare professionals to develop strategies for assuring adequate midwifery care for women during a disaster and its aftermath.

POSITION
Education for midwives should include components that provide knowledge and raise awareness of the health problems of women and families both at the time of a disaster and in the mid- to long-term period afterwards.

RECOMMENDATIONS
ICM encourages member associations to:
- recognise the importance of preparedness for disasters
- expand the contents of midwifery education programmes to include health problems of women and families related to disasters
- conduct research to develop strategies to assuring appropriate midwifery care during and after disasters
- aim to have representation, whenever possible, on committees forming policy on disasters at governmental level
RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Adopted at Brisbane International Council meeting, 2005
Reviewed and adopted at Durban International Council meeting, 2011
Due for next review 2017