This year, the ICM/UNFPA Investing in Midwifery Programme has continued to expand rapidly with around 30 countries now engaged either directly or indirectly in the joint programme. By August, 21 midwifery advisors were in place, assisting the UNFPA country offices to improve access to midwifery in the countries where they work.

For years it has been felt that lack of adequate data has been a key impediment in securing commitments by government towards strengthening midwifery. The main highlight of 2011 has been the launch of the State of the World’s Midwifery Report on 20th June 2011 at the International Confederation of Midwives’ 29th Triennial Congress in Durban, South Africa. The report responds to the 2010 joint Call to Action issued at the Global Midwifery Symposium in 2010 and represents the joint efforts of some 30 partners to collect and analyse data on midwifery under the leadership of UNFPA and the ICM.

The report reviews the state of midwifery in 58 low resource countries representing 91% of the global burden of maternal mortality and 82% of newborn mortality. It provides fresh data and analysis and identifies common challenges, while highlighting promising approaches to strengthening midwifery services around the world. The findings reiterate shortage and uneven distribution of midwives; lack of standardization in education and training and an urgent need for strengthening the regulatory and policy framework. It is an essential part of the advocacy and strategic planning toolkit for midwifery advisers at country, regional and international levels.

Since the global launch in June, a number of countries have organised national launches of the report, to highlight local midwifery issues and generate necessary stakeholder commitments. These include: Afghanistan, Cote D’Ivoire, Gambia, Guyana, Indonesia, Laos, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Surinam, Uruguay and Vietnam among others. Other countries have launches planned. The report, which is available in English, French and Spanish, can be downloaded from: http://unfpa.org/sowmy/report/home.html.

New Global Competencies and Standards for Midwives endorsed: Following endorsement at the ICM Council in June 2011, midwives are now the first profession to have established global competencies and standards for education, regulation and association. Taken together, these competencies and standards provide a professional framework that can be used by midwifery advisers, educators, regulators, association leaders, and governments to plan, strengthen and raise the standard of midwifery practice in their jurisdiction.

ICM global competencies, standards and tools include:
- Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice
- Global Standards for Midwifery Education
- Global Standards for Midwifery Regulation
- Member Association Capacity Assessment (MACAT) Tool

The standards have already been used to support country and regional planning by participants at the ICM/UNFPA gap analysis workshop in Ghana in August 2011.

To download your copy, go to: http://www.internationalmidwives.org

“The three pillars of quality midwifery workforce are education, regulation and professional associations. If one of these pillars is weak, the whole midwifery will be weak. We welcome ICM’s global standards and will be working to support the dissemination of these standards with UN agencies and our other partners, as a tool to improve the quality of care received by women and their newborn globally.

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director, UNFPA in a news release during the ICM Congress where UNFPA, SIDA and WHO all publicly committed to supporting implementation of the standards.
Highlights from around the world

Midwives on the ‘Road to Durban’ 2011

On May 5, the International Day of the Midwife (IDM), by now a key feature of the UNFPA/ICM programme calendar, was once again celebrated with the slogan “The World Needs Midwives Now More Than Ever”. The aim of International Day of the Midwife is to raise the profile of midwives, and celebrate their role in promoting health and saving lives of women and their babies. This year around 25,000 people took part in events spanning 88 countries on or around the IDM.

The 2011 IDM was celebrated with walks and activities which included free cervical and breast cancer screenings, family planning workshops and blood donation camps. Health Ministers, midwifery leaders and senior government officials, along with other relevant UN and civil society partners were closely engaged in the celebrations.

In some countries, the day was used to recognise and award selected midwives for their outstanding contributions to maternal and child health. In Laos, celebrations took place later on 6 July 2011, the day marked as the National Midwifery Day, and saw the simultaneous national launching of the State of the World’s Midwifery report. The Ministry of Health hosted a high level event to celebrate the granting of National Licences to 140 Community Midwives who will be posted to rural health centres nationwide.

A media and information pack was prepared by ICM and with media support from UNFPA along with widespread coverage on TV, radio and web news helped secure renewed commitments from policy makers.

The highlight of 2011 IDM was colourful marches by midwives organized by countries around the world to symbolically mark the first stage of the “Road to Durban”, and to show the solidarity of midwives everywhere in tackling inequalities in maternal mortality.

ICM Triennial Congress, Durban June 2011

This global midwifery event brought together 3000 midwives from over 100 countries to advocate for the critical role of midwives in reducing maternal and newborn mortality, and to share best practices, experiences and knowledge. This is the first time ICM had held a Congress in Africa and it presented a great opportunity for midwives from the continent and around the world to gather and learn from each other to improve practice globally.

Congress started with an inaugural march on 18th June, when 1000 Congress delegates and supporters representing over a 100 countries walked 5km through the city along the Durban beachfront. The Congress also saw the launch of the first ever State of the World’s Midwifery Report and the global launch of ICM education and regulation standards.

The Congress scientific programme featured over 400 workshops and concurrent sessions while daily plenary and partner panels brought together top level policy makers, and maternal and child health experts.

More information about Congress can be found at: www.internationalmidwives.org. Film interviews with midwifery leaders on key topics can also be viewed on www.globalhealthtv.com

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WELCOME TO THE NEW ICM PRESIDENT

We extend a warm welcome to the new ICM President, Mrs. Frances Day-Stirk. Frances is Director of Learning Research and Practice Development at the Royal College of Midwives in London. ICM represents around 250,000 midwives in around 100 countries. Frances was elected by representatives of the Confederation’s member associations in June 2011.

In her inaugural speech at the ICM 29th Triennial Congress in Durban South Africa, Frances Day-Stirk said that it is an “honour and a privilege” to be elected as ICM President and to build on the work of previous Presidents and Directors who have brought ICM to where it is today.

Frances talked of a new “ERA”, not just in supporting midwifery Education, Regulation, Association and research, but also in inclusiveness and partnership working. “The ICM will be working hard to make the Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal mortality by 75% by 2015 a reality and not a pipe dream. Every minute across the developing world a woman dies during pregnancy and childbirth. The tragedy of maternal mortality is that it robs vulnerable babies of a mother. Across the world, midwives are working to bridge the huge economic, social and geographical inequalities in maternal deaths.”

Frances will be supported in her Presidency by an Executive consisting of Vice President Debrah Lewis Treasurer, Marian van Huis, Secretary-General, Agneta Bridges and by Board Members comprising of representatives from all ICM’s geographical regions:

Sue Bree (Asia Pacific) Frances Ganges (Americas)
Mary Higgins (Europe) Mary Kirk (Asia Pacific)
Deliwe Nyathikazi (Africa) Laurence Monteiro (Africa)
Maria Papadopoulou (Europe) Mirian Teresa Solís Rojas
Ingela Wiklund (Europe) (Americas)

Standing down from the ICM Board, with thanks for their valuable service, were; Marième Fall, Karen Guilliland, Debrah Lewis, Hilda Rodríguez, Eva Selin and Vitor Varela.

ICM Secretary General says Thank You to past ICM President, Bridget Lynch

The last triennium ended with a productive Council Meeting and Congress in Durban in June 2011, where we also said farewell to Bridget Lynch as she completed her term of office as President of ICM. Now, as our attention turns to this triennium - and we start work with our new President and Board- it would seem appropriate to reflect on the achievements of the last triennium during Bridget’s Presidency.

Anyone who has met or worked with Bridget will agree that she is engaging and full of vitality. The triennium 2008-2011 will be memorable for the passion with which Bridget fulfilled her Presidential role, inspiring and enthusing us to use every opportunity to advance midwifery and midwives, so that the health and wellbeing of women and children could be enhanced world-wide. As President, Bridget brought an urgency to her work and this cascaded to our work as we completed the task of developing ICM’s global standards for education and regulation; reviewed ICM’s competencies and Midwifery Association Capacity Assessment Tool: documents which will advance the mission of ICM in this triennium.

On behalf of women, children and midwives of the world, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bridget for her enthusiasm, her commitment to the work of ICM and her contribution to strengthening midwifery globally.

Agneta S Bridges,
Secretary General ICM

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West African College of Nursing 11th Biennial Meeting
The ICM/UNFPA Investing in Midwives Programme participated in the West African College of Nursing 11th Biennial General meeting and 20th Scientific Session held in Banjul, the Gambia in March 2011. The meeting created a forum to discuss “Maternal and Child Survival in West Africa: Reflections on the gains and constraints.”

A fond farewell to Dr. Vincent Fauveau

We take his opportunity to bid a fond farewell to Dr. Vincent Fauveau, Senior Maternal Health Advisor, UNFPA, who has been a staunch supporter of midwifery through the years and promoter of the UNFPA/ICM Midwifery Programme. While recognizing his leadership in strengthening midwifery we also applaud his work as the main Coordinator of the State of the World’s Midwifery Report. Dr. Fauveau, good luck to you. The midwives will miss you!

"Dear friends and dear midwives,
I had the great pleasure to meet most of you in Durban in June, which was also my last month with UNFPA. The joint UNFPA/ICM Programme that we have built together will always be very dear to me. I wish you every success in your work and mission. I will not forget you and you can always count on me."

Vincent Fauveau

A warm welcome to our new midwifery advisors

- Mrs. Kristina Engelin, Midwifery Technical Specialist, UNFPA, New York
- Mrs Tsigereda Tiruneh, Country Midwife Advisor, Ethiopia,
- Mrs. Henrietta Eke Mboula, Country Midwife Advisor, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Mrs. Mai Service, Country Midwife Advisor, Chad
- Ms. Rabefitiia G. Josia, Country Midwife Advisor, Madagascar

Grateful thanks

Our gratitude and wishes for a happy and peaceful retirement go to Mrs. Catherine Ndamama, the Country Midwifery Adviser, Burundi. We extend our thanks for her services towards scaling up midwifery in Burundi.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Midwifery Education

- **Ethiopia** has completed a model curriculum designed in line with the Ethiopian Occupational Standard and in accordance with the WHO/ICM competencies. **Zambia and Burundi** have also revised their training curriculum and **Cambodia** Midwifery Council has finalized the Essential Midwifery Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice
- **Ghana** will soon be starting its first Bachelor of Midwifery Programme in September 2011. The initiative is being spearheaded by the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science And Technology, at the request of the Ministry of Health and co-sponsored by the ICM-UNFPA. Midwives in Ghana are excited about this timely and laudable initiative as it will pave way for a higher standard of training and quality of care as well as provide career advancement for midwives in Ghana.
- **Review of SBA programme in Nepal**: A workshop reviewing the skilled birth attendant programme resulted in recommendations to conduct a study to investigate the feasibility of promoting midwifery in

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the country and to develop a Post-basic BSc in Midwifery (2yrs after nursing). The Programme has committed itself to supporting the Government in the development of the curriculum.

- **Liberia**, a new member of the UNFPA/ICM Programme has upgraded 2 midwifery training institutions.

- The Midwifery and Nursing School of **Benin** reopened in February 2011 after being closed for five years. 25 midwifery and 25 nursing students have been admitted to the school, which is currently under the tutelage of the University of Benin.

- **Burundi** has revised its midwifery curriculum to reflect the ICM global competencies for basic midwifery practice.

- In **Burkina Faso**, 214 midwifery students from both the public and private midwifery training schools have received training on EmONC.

- UNFPA/ICM have provided support to the **Government of Bangladesh** for putting together an operational strategy for scaling up midwifery to meet the target of 3,000 midwives by 2015 and a 4 year Bachelors in Midwifery is being introduced.

- In **Afghanistan**, the National Midwifery and Nursing Services Policy and Strategy has been approved by the Technical Advisory Group of Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and submitted to MoPH for endorsement.

- In response to the emergency crisis in **Cote d’Ivoire**, some reproductive health emergency kits, drugs and equipment were distributed in Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Daloa and some other districts for safe and hygienic deliveries. Selected midwives have also benefited from training on a minimum initial services package for reproductive health in humanitarian support, in response to the crisis.

- On 6 July 2011, **Laos** celebrated its National Midwifery Day along with the national launch of the State of the World's Midwifery Report. Marking the occasion, 140 newly trained community midwives received their certificates. Trained under the National Skilled Birth Attendance Plan, they will be placed in 140 rural health facilities and dispensaries.

**Midwifery Associations**

- The **Afghan Midwives Association** initiated Leadership Development Programmes for its central and provincial Leaders and conducted a series of in-service and quality improvement training.

- On the occasion of the International Day of Midwives, on 5 May 2011, the **National Nurses and Midwives Association of South Sudan was launched** in Juba with the aim of building a strong profession for a reduction in maternal mortality.

- In **Burundi**, the association has been recognized by the Ministry of Public Health, in a partnership endorsement. Some 603 midwives from 13 provinces have registered with the Council.

- Congratulations are also due to **Zambia** for launching its new midwifery association.

- In **Afghanistan**, the first National Midwifery and Nursing Strategy has been developed and efforts are underway to establish the **Afghan Midwives and Nurses Council**. The first draft of the Midwifery Act completed a while ago is under review by the government. On July 26, 2011, the Ministry of Public Health with technical support of the Afghan Midwives Association and financial support of USAID conducted the first consensus-building workshop for the establishment of Midwives and Nurses council with participation of more than 60 core stakeholders from government and international agencies.

- **Madagascar** has introduced legislation to govern the midwifery profession. At the 2010 Congress, a midwife was elected as the President of Midwives Council of Madagascar, to succeed the former president who was an Obstetrician Gynaecologist.

- **Cambodia** Midwifery Council has finalized the Essential Competencies of Basic Midwifery Practice and submitted to the MoH for endorsement.

- In **Guyana**, the newly formed Association has witnessed a fourfold increase in its membership since its launch in 2010. It has taken up a number of bold initiatives to raise the profile of midwifery practice in Guyana. These include, increased opportunities for continuous supportive supervision and education for midwives and strengthened leadership capacity of midwives (especially executive members of the Midwives Association) to make the association viable, active and visible. Key activities of the Association include a) launch of an annual midwifery conference; b) the conduct of Continuous Education sessions in more than 50% of the administrative regions - with midwifery focal points operating in 6 out of these 10 areas; c) celebration of International Day of the Midwife with a National Launch and award given to midwives.

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and midwifery tutors; and, d) launch of the State of the World Midwifery Report, among others. As a result of its efforts a 100% success rate was achieved at the State Midwifery Examinations in all 3 midwifery schools in the latter part of 2010.

Capacity Building in Africa

A two day standards dissemination workshop for 22 programme countries in Africa was organized in Accra, Ghana on 19-20 August. The objective was to orient all the country midwife advisors and selected national programme officers engaged in midwifery capacity building at national level on the latest ICM essential competencies and global standards for midwifery education and regulation and familiarize them with the Midwifery Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT).

This was followed by a five day Gap Analysis workshop in which stakeholders (midwifery educators, regulators and association members) from 12 African countries participated and came up with concrete country action plans.

Links to participant blogs and more information about the workshop can be found on the ICM website www.internationalmidwives.org

Country focus: midwifery and the birth of a nation

On 9 July 2011, South Sudan became an independent country and the newest nation on earth. Following decades of conflict and uncertainty, major challenges lie ahead. South Sudan’s maternal mortality ratio is amongst the highest in the world. With a population of more than 8 million, it has only about 10 midwives with diplomas and fewer than 100 ‘community midwives’.

Over 3,000 midwives are still needed to ensure safe motherhood throughout the region. In addition to 2 international midwifery advisors supporting the ministry of health, in early 2011, UNFPA has established a country office of South Sudan and recruited the first group of 15 out of an expected 18 international midwives through United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in collaboration with the South Sudan Ministry of Health and funds provided by the Australian government. Working in a challenging cultural environment, these UNV midwives have quickly noticed that social determinants such as poverty, social exclusion and low levels of education all contribute to maternal and infant mortality and that community engagement is important apart from closer collaboration with the traditional birth attendants who are respected among communities but lack the training, skills and equipment to handle complications in pregnancies and are also reluctant to make referrals. Without this engagement, change will be difficult to come by.

National Commitments to United Nations Secretary General’s Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health

Some twenty-six countries have made challenging and concrete commitments to scale up skilled attendance, particularly midwifery at all births in response to the SG’s Global Strategy to reach MDGs 4 & 5. Few Examples: Afghanistan has pledged to increase its midwifery workforce from 2,400 to 4,556; Bangladesh has promised to train an additional 3,000 midwives; Burundi has pledged to increase the number of midwives from 39 in 2010 to 250 by 2015 and the number of training schools from 1 to 4; Ethiopia plans to roughly quadruple the number of midwives from the existing 2050; Rwanda pledges to have five-fold increase in its midwifery workforce; Chad has pledged to strengthen human resources for health by training 40 midwives a year for the next 4 years, including creating a school of midwifery; The Lao People’s Democratic Republic has committed itself to providing free deliveries in order to ensure access to the most vulnerable and producing 1500 new midwives by 2015 and Sudan has taken on the challenge of training and employing 4600 midwives by 2015. For detailed country pledges visit: www.everywomaneverychild.org

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