Joint Statement from Development Partners on Promoting Midwifery Services in India

28 November 2011, New Delhi

Development Partners (Multi lateral, Bilateral and International NGOs) supporting India’s efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5, recognize the important contribution of midwifery in improving maternal and newborn health in India. The second indicator of MDG 5, “proportion of births attended by skilled health providers” highlights the crucial role of midwives and others with midwifery skills in providing skilled birth attendance to achieve optimal maternal health outcomes.

We recognise the significant strides made by the Country in reducing maternal mortality in the last decade especially with the large investments made through the National Rural Health Mission/RCH II. We commend efforts made by the Government in improving the reach of maternal health services, introduction of Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) and the recently launched Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram, resulting in substantial increase in institutional delivery, empowering and training nursing & midwifery personnel and doctors in skilled birth attendance.

On the occasion of International Workshop “Midwifery Standards Orientation/Dissemination and Educational Harmonization” in New Delhi, we:

Reiterate our commitment to intensify our efforts leading to country adaptation, dissemination and implementation of the global standards for midwifery education, regulation and professional associations;

Commit ourselves to facilitate standards-based pre service midwifery education in existing training programmes in our areas of work in states and in districts;

Continue to stress the importance of healthcare providers working in a supportive enabling environment, which must include basic equipment and drugs, as well as good communication and transportation systems, to ensure timely referrals when needed, and have effective and supportive supervision;

Undertake interventions for ensuring skilled human resources for maternal health throughout the continuum of care, founded on professional ethics and respectful care at birth, with special focus on midwifery skills, promoting task shifting as well as establishing professional mid-wives.

Taking into consideration the comparative advantage, core expertise, experience, and collective strengths in Maternal and Newborn Health, Development Partners undertake to accelerate our joint support to India to improve maternal and newborn survival by strengthening midwifery services.