



## International Confederation of Midwives

### THE MIDWIFE IS THE FIRST CHOICE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL FOR CHILDBEARING WOMEN

#### BACKGROUND

In the context of widespread discussion about the global consensus on skilled attendants at childbirth, ICM has recognised a need to identify the midwife specifically as the most appropriate health care professional for women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.

#### STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The ICM believes that midwives and midwifery skills are essential resources in achieving safer childbirth and that all women should have access to a midwife. The ICM believes that appropriate collaboration with others will improve the health and social outcomes for mothers and their newborns.

#### POSITION

The ICM recognises midwives as the professional of choice for childbearing women in all areas of the world. This universal standard is based on initial and ongoing midwifery education that is competency based. The ICM promotes the midwifery model of care based on respect for human dignity, compassion and the promotion of human rights for all persons.

Given that there are insufficient midwives throughout the world to meet the needs of all childbearing women, the ICM recognises the vital role that other health professionals play in saving the lives of both mothers and babies, especially in low-resource countries. Midwives will work with all levels of health workers to make childbearing safe for all women and newborns, while at the same time aspiring to achieve universal care by midwives for all women

In all collaborative work, the ICM will promote and endorse midwives and midwifery skills as defined by the *Definition of the Midwife* (ICM, 2005) and the *ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* (ICM, 2002), as vital to the health and wellbeing of women and the newborn. This belief will underpin all ICM collaborative efforts. Where the ICM's position is compromised, in global negotiations, in order to move forward, they will continue to issue a parallel statement endorsing the value of midwifery care in achieving the above.

#### GUIDING STATEMENT TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:

All member associations will promote and endorse midwives and midwifery skills, as defined by the ICM core documents and position statements, as vital to the health and wellbeing of women and the newborn.

Member associations are encouraged to use this position statement, as needed, as a guide for expanding education programmes and regulatory frameworks, which will lead



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to an increased number of competent midwives in their country practising the full scope of midwifery, in order better to serve childbearing women and their families.

### RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- Making pregnancy safer: the critical role of the skilled attendant, a joint statement by WHO, ICM and FIGO. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO/RHR, 2004.
- ICM. Definition of the Midwife. ICM, 2005.
- ICM. Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. ICM, 2002.
- ICM. Council resolution on redirecting activities. ICM, 2005.

### OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

The World Health Report 2005. Make every mother and child count. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 2005.

*Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008*

*Due for next review 2014*