



# International Confederation of Midwives

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ICM Council speaks out on ethical recruitment of midwives between countries**

Member associations of the International Confederation of Midwives have raised concerns regarding the aggressive recruitment of midwives from other countries to counteract chronic shortages of midwifery staff. This is the consequence of the critical lack of midwives in many countries and it has serious implications for maternity services and the health of women and newborns worldwide.

The ICM Board of Management has drafted a statement on this topic for adoption by the 60 national midwifery associations from 50 countries that are represented at the ICM Council meeting in Vienna.

The statement acknowledges that international work provides excellent learning opportunities for midwives who will in turn enhance the care of women and their families in the midwives' country of origin. However, the ICM believes that **the international recruitment of midwives must not be carried out in a fashion that is against the interests of another country where the impact will prove detrimental to the welfare of women and their newborns.**

Midwives in member associations are asked to develop practices for recruitment within their countries, which ensure that:

- The right of the individual midwife to migrate is supported
- Developing countries are not targeted for recruitment
- Midwives recruited from other countries are protected from exploitation, lack of appropriate information and false and misleading claims
- Midwives recruited from other countries are protected by employment/industrial legislation as provided to other employees
- Midwives recruited from other countries have access to safe and equitable working conditions, appropriate orientation to work practices, career advancement opportunities, education and professional development

A speaker from the Zimbabwe Confederation of Midwives gave the experience from her country: 'we train enough midwives for the jobs here', she said, 'but then they migrate to other countries, and this affects our abilities to achieve safe motherhood'. She quoted statistics showing that in the 1980s, when midwives stayed with their jobs in Zimbabwe, the rate of maternal mortality was falling; after that, migration began to increase and maternal deaths started to rise again.

This ICM Council meeting precedes the 26<sup>th</sup> Triennial Congress (April 14-18) when 2,500 midwives will gather in Vienna to participate in a diverse and multilingual programme of lectures, workshops, poster sessions and presentations.

The ICM is a Confederation of 83 national midwifery associations, founded in 1919, and aims to 'advance world-wide the aims and aspirations of midwives in the attainment of improved outcomes for women in their childbearing years, their newborn and their families wherever they reside'.

*For further information contact ICM headquarters or visit the website [www.internationalmidwives.org](http://www.internationalmidwives.org)*