



International Confederation of Midwives

PRESS RELEASE

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ICM Council commits to more flexible membership fees and financial assistance for midwives' associations in developing countries

Delegates from 60 midwifery associations in 50 countries have debated how best to help midwifery associations in the poorest countries of the world take their part in activities at international level.

The midwives were gathered in Vienna at the triennial meeting of the the ICM International Council, which is the governing body of the Confederation. Members of the Council were asked to consider a number of proposals put forward by member associations and the ICM Board of Management; the decisions reached included:

- The basic level of fees to be paid by midwifery associations in membership with ICM will remain the same, so that that no group will have to put a greater financial burden on its own individual members
- The criteria for access to the Membership Fees Assistance Fund will be broadened so that more countries where midwives are poorly paid can receive help; grants will also be made over a three-year period rather than for one year
- A new membership category is to be created for associations in countries where there are considerable levels of poverty although they are classified by the United Nations criteria as 'medium' developed (ICM already has a low fee of €80 for 'least developed' nations). Such a category would include, for example, Ecuador, Indonesia, Morocco, Paraguay and the Philippines; member associations in these countries will be asked to pay €160.

It was further announced that a total of 90 midwives from developing countries had been sponsored to attend the Vienna meetings. Of these, 33 had received direct assistance from the ICM 's 'Sponsor a Midwife' programme to which contributions had been made by the Association of Radical Midwives (UK), the the Association of Supervisors of Midwives (UK), the Bund Deutsches Hebammen (Germany), the Fédération Suisse des Sages-Femmes (Swiss Federation of Midwives), the Japan Academy of Midwifery, the Japanese Midwives Association, the Midwives' Division of the Japanese Nursing Association and the Royal College of Midwives (UK).

This ICM Council meeting precedes the 26th 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 other 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