



UNFPA and ICM invest in Midwives and others with midwifery skills to accelerate progress towards MDG5 *Quarterly Update April 2009*

This programme, jointly executed by UNFPA and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and jointly funded by Sweden, UNFPA and other contributors to the Maternal Health Thematic Fund, aims at building national capacity in low-resource countries to increase skilled attendance at all births by scaling up the capacity of midwives. It will contribute significantly towards the achievement of two of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): improving maternal health (MDG 5) and reducing neonatal mortality (MDG 4). It is also in line with the ICPD and the international community's call for investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights. The programme has two areas of work: at the **Country** level and the **Global/Regional** level. This is the third Update since the start of the Programme in February 2008.

■ Country-level activities and personnel to support national efforts to scale-up midwifery:

- The UNFPA Africa Regional Office has identified 9 priority countries in Africa for the first wave of this programme, 4 Anglophone countries (**Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia**) and 5 Francophone countries (**Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, and Madagascar**). From the Arab States, the Regional Office has identified **Sudan and Djibouti**.
- In addition to **Haiti, Guyana** from amongst the Latin American and Caribbean States has joined the Midwives Programme effective 1 March 2009. Cambodia too has an ongoing Midwives Programme with German funding.
- Welcome to all the **Country Midwife Advisers (CMAs)** in **Benin, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Uganda and Zambia** who have joined their respective UNFPA Country Offices in the last few months.
- The Country Midwife Advisers will play a critical role in assisting the UNFPA country offices in strengthening midwifery at country level. They will:
 - Develop specific work plans for supporting National Midwives Associations, Training Institutions and Midwives Boards or Councils.
 - Play a catalytic role in improving the contribution, image and status of midwives in their country.

■ Programme Strategy, Technical Management and Support:

- **The International Midwife Adviser (IMA): Welcome to Ms. Abigail Kyei, a senior midwife from Ghana, who has joined as International Midwife Adviser as of October 2008!**

Abigail (a.kyei@internationalmidwives.org) operates from the programme office in Ghana, at Accra and she will advise and technically supervise the overall programme, including advocating for partnership building at global and regional

levels. She is a member of the Core Steering and Management Group.

- **The Regional Midwifery Advisers for Anglophone and Francophone Africa: Welcome to Ms. Jemima Dennis-Antwi, who has been recently recruited by the ICM as its Anglophone RMA and to Ms. Rachel Ibinga Koula who has been recently recruited by the ICM as its Francophone RMA!**

Jemima (j.dennis-antwi@internationalmidwives.org) and Rachel (r.koula@internationalmidwives.org) are also based in Accra and will provide technical support to the CMAs, including network implementation, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based training for the CMAs. They will report to the IMA.



Billboard in Malawi "Trust, Retain and Train nurse-midwives!" photo courtesy of Helen de Pinho, AMDD

▪ Programme Coordination and Management

- **UNFPA Programme Coordinator: Welcome to Ms. Geeta Lal, who has been recruited by the UNFPA as its Midwives Programme Coordinator and assumed her responsibilities as of November 2008!**

Geeta (lal@unfpa.org) is based in UNFPA's NY Headquarters, and she is responsible for global coordination of the Midwives Programme in collaboration with ICM and UNFPA country offices and she is a member of the Core Steering and Management Group.

▪ UNFPA – ICM Midwives Programme countries' expansion for 2009:

- As implied in the joint project document and in coordination with the Maternal Health Thematic Fund, the Midwives Programme will expand in 2009 to additional countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Discussions regarding the countries to be joining the UNFPA – ICM Midwives Programme in 2009 are currently being conducted between UNFPA's Regional Offices, ICM and additional stakeholders and partners.



Bridget and Thoraya, Geneva, February 2009, Photo ICM

▪ Recent Events:

- **ICM hosted the Midwifery Services Technical Advisory Group Meeting in Geneva, on 2-3 February 2009**, at which 31 experts from different areas of maternal and newborn health participated from ICM, UNFPA, WHO, PAHO, AMDD, JHPIEGO, American College, Sweden, as well as independent experts. The Purpose was to develop a comprehensive and adaptable **Midwifery Services Framework** within which a midwifery workforce could be developed efficiently and effectively. The **UNFPA Executive Director, Ms. Thoraya Obaid**, while visiting the Technical Advisory Group meeting told the participants “We take your work very seriously, and your Programme is a key component of our UNFPA Thematic Fund for Maternal Health. You

are well positioned as we work with the most vulnerable and poorest sectors of society as we move towards 2015”.

- **First Forum of the joint UNFPA - ICM Midwives Programme:** ICM and UNFPA jointly hosted the first **Inception Forum for Country Midwife Advisers and Capacity Building Workshop** in Accra, Ghana, 3-13 March 2009. More than 35 participants from 14 countries participated in the Inception Forum. These included Senior Technical Officers from ICM and UNFPA, the International and the two Regional Midwife Advisers and Country Midwife Advisers from 12 countries currently under the programme, Advisers from additional countries (Haiti and Cambodia), UNFPA RH National Program officers (NPOs) who are overseeing the Midwives Programme in their respective countries. The workshop included a half day launch of the Midwives Programme, which was attended by representatives from the Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health, DG Health, the Ghana Registered Midwives Association, the Nurses and Midwives Council, and additional partner organizations and stakeholders. The same day also marked the formal opening of the office for the **ICM section in the Investing in Midwives Programme in Ghana** which will coordinate and support the global Midwives Programme and house the IMA and RMAs for Africa. The workshop achieved its aim of building a strategic perspective in promoting and strengthening midwifery services at country level with specific focus on midwifery education; regulation and strengthening of midwifery associations. In addition, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity towards experience sharing around midwifery services in various countries and learning from these experiences. Participants also took part in a three-day Management Training program as part of the workshop.
- **First Core Steering & Management Group meeting for 2009 was held in Accra, Ghana on 2nd March 2009** taking advantage of the joint ongoing UNFPA/ICM Midwives Inception Forum and Capacity Building Workshop. At this meeting, various programme, policy and operational level issues were discussed in-depth to ensure smooth coordination and global strengthening of the Midwives Programme. The Midwives Programme effective 1 April 2009 is being merged into the Maternal Health Thematic Fund and will continue to draw synergies from current Health and Development trends, including Health Systems Strengthening and Primary Health Care, involving individuals, families and communities.
- **Inception missions for the Maternal Health Thematic Fund:** Since the previous Newsletter update, Inception Missions have taken place to Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Djibouti, Guyana and Malawi. These have provided opportunities to liaise with the respective Departments of Human Resources for Maternal Health in the Ministries of Health visit the Schools of Midwifery and meet with the national Midwives Associations. An inception mission to Burundi is planned in the near future.