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Elizabeth Duff (International News Editor)

International Confederation of Midwives appoints New Zealand midwife as new Chief Executive Officer

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), the global “voice” for the midwifery profession, has selected New Zealander Sally Pairman as its next CEO.

Dr Pairman was chosen from a list of international candidates to head the ICM, an organisation made up of 130 midwives’ associations in 113 countries representing approximately 400,000 midwives.

“This is a very exciting opportunity because there is now strong research evidence to support what midwives have always known – that care led by well-educated, regulated and autonomous midwives, integrated within health systems – is the best solution to the challenges of ensuring quality maternity care for mothers and their babies around the world,” says Dr Pairman. “The ICM’s mission is to ensure that all women, irrespective of their economic status, have access to midwifery care and because millions of women throughout the world cannot yet take this for granted, there is a huge job to be done.”

Dr Pairman has been closely involved in the development of the midwifery profession in New Zealand over the past 33 years. She was involved in the campaign that led to midwives gaining the right to practise autonomously through the Nurses Amendment Act 1990, was a founding member and later President of the New Zealand College of Midwives and was the first Chair of the New Zealand profession’s regulatory body, the Midwifery Council, when it was set up in 2003.

She was one of the first midwives in New Zealand to gain a master’s degree and later obtained a doctorate. She has been a key figure in shaping midwifery education, having helped to design the country’s first midwifery undergraduate degree and the first master of midwifery programme. Until recently she was Director of Learning and Teaching and Co-Head of the School of Midwifery at Otago Polytechnic. She has also written and co-authored textbooks and numerous articles on midwifery including *Midwifery: preparation for practice*, the core text in midwifery schools across Australasia.

In 2008 she was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to women’s health.

Dr Pairman has been involved in the ICM for a number of years and says that New Zealand’s midwifery profession has influenced the organisation’s philosophies, especially that of midwifery as a partnership between midwives and women.

“We are really the only country in the world where maternity services are integrated throughout the whole maternity journey and midwife-led continuity of care is embedded in the maternity

system. This is recognised by colleagues internationally and they look to us to see what may be transferrable to their contexts.”

The ICM is based in The Hague and Dr Pairman will be moving from Dunedin and planned to take up her post in January.

Sally Pairman follows a number of distinguished midwives in this role, including Marie Goubran, Joan Walker, Petra ten Hoop-Bender, Kathy Herschderfer and Frances Ganges, as well as Della Sherratt and Judi Brown who held the post on a temporary basis.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE1701/S00010/top-international-post-goes-to-new-zealand-midwife.htm>

“Together We Can!”: Amplifying the voices of healthcare professionals

On 24 November 2016, the healthcare professional associations the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and the International Pediatrics Association (IPA) announced the launch of the *Together We Can* campaign.

Health professionals are a critical force in driving forward improvements in reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health. The international healthcare professional associations – ICM, ICN, FIGO and IPA – represent millions of midwives, nurses, gynaecologists, obstetricians and paediatricians whose expert care touches the lives of billions of people each year.

The professions are coming together in the *Together We Can* campaign in order to champion a shared agenda and ensure that the experts who care for mothers, newborns and children are at the centre of health policy decisions.

The *Together We Can* campaign supports the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*, includes the targets to reduce maternal deaths and end preventable newborn and child deaths – which is at the centre of this new initiative. The campaign also contributes to the enhancement of the health professional workforce in developing countries, another priority in SDG3.

Many mother and newborn deaths are preventable. New data, released at the launch of the *Together We Can* campaign, highlights the nine main causes which are responsible for the high mortality rates in the 20 countries with the highest instance of these deaths. These nine main killers are: haemorrhage, hypertension, maternal sepsis, prematurity, asphyxia, neonatal sepsis, childhood pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria. Simple interventions in the way mothers and babies are cared for could make a significant difference: these actions include the rotavirus and hib vaccinations,

active management of third stage labour (AMTSL) and kangaroo care.

ICM President, Frances Day-Stirk, said: “The global data on maternal mortality indicates that most preventable maternal and newborn deaths occur in low and middle income countries. The key to ensure that progress is made in achieving SDGs 3 and 5, more qualified and supported healthcare professionals are needed – all working together to make the change.”

FIGO President, Professor Chittaranjan Narahari Purandare, said: “... It is critical that we provide much needed antenatal care during pregnancy, deliver [women] safely with healthy newborns, look after their wellbeing during the postnatal period and give the children healthier childhoods.”

ICN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Frances Hughes, said: “The *Together We Can* campaign demonstrates the critical role of the health workforce in reducing maternal, newborn and child deaths. As nurses, we know that it is only by working together effectively that we can promote the interventions which work best to protect these vulnerable populations.”

IPA President, Dr Zulfiqar Bhutta, said: “This campaign will put us where we need to be - at the centre of health policy and implementation.”

The heads of the global organisations said: ‘We need your help to spread the word so that together we can deliver safer pregnancy, better birth and a healthier childhood. We want every health professional whose life has been touched by the care of a gynaecologist, obstetrician, paediatrician, midwife or nurse to share their story using the hashtag #TouchingStories.

To find out more and download the campaign pack visit www.TogetherWeCan.world.

ICM award winners

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) has announced the winners of its research and education awards 2016. The awards include:

- US\$7,000 contribution towards their research project
- Full sponsorship (travel including cost for visa application, hotel accommodation, congress registration, and per diem) for the ICM Triennial Congress in Toronto 18–22 June, 2017, where they will have the opportunity to present their work.
- Opportunity to publish their research in the *International Journal of Childbirth*.

The purpose of the research awards is to promote midwifery research that enhances and documents evidence based midwifery practice and to further develop midwifery research capacity. The awards seek to support midwives to engage in research and recognize midwives who have taken an active role in conducting research or dissemination thereof through conferences and other channels.

- Loreto Pantoja Manzanares, Colegio de Matronas de Chile, carrying out a multicentre study of the prevalence of domestic violence in women attending primary health centres during pregnancy and postpartum: association with characteristics of the victim.
- Bupe Mwamba, Midwives Association of Zambia (MAZ), for implementation of a Perinatal Problem Identification Program (PPIP) in the tertiary and secondary hospitals of Zambia
- Elke Slagt-Tichelman, Royal Dutch Midwives Association (KNOV), to research ‘obstetric Care and mother to infant bonding’.
- Zahra Sultani, Afghanistani Midwives Association (AMA), with a proposal entitled ‘What we do?, what women want? Perceptions and experiences’ of Afghanistan health providers and

women on birth positioning as a women’s right; an exploratory study from Afghanistan’.

- Violet Kaonga, Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAM), who is improving midwifery education in Malawi by using mentorship programs in clinical setting, and focusing on the skills of teaching midwifery
- Kleyde Ventura de Souza, Brazilian Association of Midwives and Nurse-Midwives, looking at developing a following and evaluation process for Nurse-Midwives Courses of Specialization (CEE-Rede Cegonha II), having by reference the guidelines proposed by ICM.

<http://internationalmidwives.org/news/?nid=385>

Young Midwifery Leaders Programme: Establishing a culture of leadership

Twelve Young Midwifery Leaders (YMLs) from Africa, Americas and Asia have embarked on a journey that will equip them with leadership skills; and empower them to make meaningful change in their society and profession.

The introductory leadership training programme which took place in Abu Dhabi 5–9 December, was a curtain raiser to an 18-month training that the YMLs will undergo.

The 2016/17 ICM Young Midwifery Leaders (YML) Programme will mimic the 2004–2007 programme, created and co-ordinated by Zimbabwean midwife Nester Moyo for the ICM, and aims to establish a culture of leadership among young midwives. This programme is geared towards enhancing the skills of midwives in research-based decision- and policy-making, thus increasing the influence of the profession on national government issues that relate to midwifery worldwide.

Moreover, the programme intends to prepare the YMLs to engage with and support their own associations in identifying and addressing areas of growth; and to develop a continuing network that will support them to further develop their leadership potential through the building of a critical mass.

The training programme will run for 18 months; a distance learning approach and mentorship will be used. The ICM will facilitate the exposure of the participants to the international area and provide a nurturing and supportive environment for creativity and initiative among participants.

In May 2016 during the Women Deliver conference, 30 remarkable young midwives from around the world were selected to participate in the Young Midwives in the Lead: Midwifery Symposium. One of the objectives was to showcase how investments in YMLs can improve quality care within midwifery practice, highlighting the importance of investment in research, advocacy, mentorship and leadership skills of young midwife leaders.

Among the 30 who attended the symposium in May, 12 YMLs were selected to be in the first batch of the 18-month training programme.

The YMLs are:

- Linvell Chirwa, Malawi
- Samara Ferrara, Mexico
- Sodere Nurgi, Ethiopia
- Yvonne Delphine Nsaba Uwera, Rwanda
- Jigme Choden, Bhutan
- Olabisi Peace Adigun, Nigeria
- Clara Methie, Zimbabwe
- Ibana Karen Costa, Uruguay
- Marina Hashwani, Pakistan
- Alixandra Bacon, Canada

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