



## Afghan Midwives Association (AMA)

### Call for Action on International Midwives Day by Afghan Midwives Association

Dear Leaders of Afghanistan,

On the occasion of International Day of Midwives (5th May), we congratulate you for your support for and contribution to the Midwives of Afghanistan. Because of your decisive leadership, more women now have access to basic primary health care services and newly trained midwives are saving the lives of thousands of women at the community level in remote provinces. This is a big change from just 5 years ago when women's issues were neglected and women did not have the basic human rights.

However, we would like to point out several realities still plaguing the midwifery profession in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

**Lack of voice and visible leadership in Public Health Ministry:** Attention is drawn to continuing lack of voice and visible leadership in Afghanistan for midwifery profession. Midwives being absent from decision making situations where others, predominantly doctors speak 'for' them. This is the well known fact that midwives are the grass root implementers of the government's initiatives for MDG 4, 5 and 6. Hence, they should be involved in decision making and policy level.

**Lack of professional development:** There are no opportunities for midwives to enhance their professional education in the country. There are many capable midwives in the country who are highly ambitious and they are desperate to pursue for higher education. However, because of unavailability of opportunities, they prefer to join some other profession, preferably which offers professional growth avenues.

**Lack of recognition as civil servant for existing community midwives:** Because of insecurity and violence, Afghan girls' enrolment in school is one of the lowest in the world, and thousands of women are deprived of the basic rights to literacy and education. As a result we do not get 12 graders for the community midwifery schools. Consequently, in remote areas because of dire need, we have to enrol below 12 grades. And when these below 12 graders students graduate, unfortunately they do not fulfil the criteria for 'Civil Servant' of MoPH. This result in job dissatisfaction and in a long run we might come across with high turnover from the profession.

On the occasion of the International Midwives' Day, we urge you to take five simple steps this year.



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قابله هارا دررول تصمیم گیری داخلی سازید:

**Step 1: Involve midwives in decision making roles:** Being the grass root health workers, midwives are fully aware of the health needs of the communities. By involving midwives at the policy level, you will be able to make more practical and sustainable decisions for the people of Afghanistan.

فرصت های ارتقای مسلکی را برای قابله ها مساعد سازید:

**Step 2: Provide career ladder and professional development opportunities:** At the moment because of unavailability of opportunities for the professional growth we are going through 'Brain Drain'. Unfortunately, we are losing our experienced and competent midwives. It is the peak time when you and other partners shall plan for the career growth of midwives for example we need to start degree program for midwifery in the county. Having advance education midwives will be well equipped to participate maternal and child health related researches and would be competent care providers, strong educators and managers.

از قابله های جامعه حمایت کنید تا به حیث خدمت گذران دولتی شناخته شوند:

**Step 3: Support community midwives to be recognized as 'Civil Servant':** There are community midwives in the community who are not eligible to be considered as 'civil servant' of MoPH of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This is causing job dissatisfaction among our experienced and competent midwives. We can overcome this challenge, if you can provide some supplemental literacy/numeracy courses in order upgrade their secular education levels. This will ultimately make them eligible to be recognized as 'civil servant'

از قابله ها قدردانی کنید:

**Step 4: Show your appreciation to a midwife:** Female health workers including midwives have overcome a lot of obstacles to provide services to your mothers, your children and your families. Your appreciation and support will encourage more women to come forward and join the workforce.

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**Step 5: Allow midwives to work according to their approved job description:** In many parts of country, midwives are not being allowed to work according to their job description. This is causing intrapersonal and intrapersonal conflict amongst midwives and other health care providers. Your support for the basic authority and responsibility of midwives i.e. their approved job description will overcome this issue.

It does not take much to save a life. As a Muslim, as a leader, as someone millions of children and families look up to, it is your duty to make a difference today.

Please do your part, and make it a better year for women.

Signature



## **Afghan Midwives Association (AMA)**

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