



MIDWIVES
ALLIANCE OF ASIA



Midwives Alliance of Asia (MAA) Declaration

Islamabad, Pakistan
12-14, September 2024



Preamble

The Midwives Alliance of Asia (MAA), with the support of the Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery (AKU-SONAM), hosted its first-ever three-day strategic directions meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan. The meeting was a testament to the unity and collaboration among midwifery leaders from ten member countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, UAE, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Yemen. This initiative aims to advance midwifery across the region by fostering South to South collaboration.

At the Islamabad meeting, the MAA members declared their commitment to advancing midwifery efforts and began developing strategic directions outlining areas for collaboration and cooperation. This marked the first step in a unified midwifery effort across the region.

Midwives and nurses constitute more than half of the health workforce in Asian countries (1) Evidence shows that substantial increases in coverage of midwife-delivered interventions could avert:

- 41% of maternal deaths
- 39% of neonatal deaths
- 26% of stillbirths globally

Additionally, a sufficient number of well-educated midwives can significantly contribute to improving women's health throughout the life cycle. Midwives' comprehensive healthcare contributions ensure that sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) issues are addressed.

In May 2024, the World Health Assembly passed Resolution 77.4 (2) on accelerating progress towards reducing maternal, newborn and child mortality in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal targets 3.1 and 3.2. This resolution reaffirms the crucial contribution of the midwives and urges member nations to invest in improving access to affordable quality and respectful care for normal birth, including the midwifery model of care. It also reiterated the need to invest in the health workforce's education, employment, regulation and retention, including midwives.

Furthermore, in 2023 the Regional Committee Resolution EM/RC70/R.4 October (3) endorsed the call for action to enhance and scale up the health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, orient investments to address skills gaps and give special attention to scaling up the education and employment of midwives and nurses to advance universal health coverage in the Region.

Midwifery Alliance of Asia (MAA)

In the light of the above-mentioned developments, we, the Midwives Alliance of Asia (MAA), declare that a unified effort to improve sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health in Asian countries is urgently needed to accelerate achievement of the SDG targets 3.1 and 3.2 and to improve the overall health of mothers and babies in the region.

We, as the Midwifery Alliance of Asia, declare that the purpose of the Alliance is to contribute to the region's efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and specifically improve sexual, reproductive, newborn health, child and adolescent health (SRMNCAH) outcomes in the Asia region. By working together and supporting joint efforts to advocate for increased investments to build a strong cadre of professional midwives, midwifery educationalists and leaders in all countries in the Asia Region and by sharing and pooling our expertise, experiences and resources, MAA believes countries will be better able to achieve their UHC goals and commitments.



Our Mission

- To provide country-level Midwifery Associations and Educational Institutions in Asia with a forum for networking, south-to-south collaboration, and mutual support to expand the professional midwifery model of care across Asia.
- To encourage national governments and those working in the field of SRMNCAH to recognise and value midwives and the midwifery model of care and to make investments in advancing the education and scope of practice of professional midwives in their countries.

MAA Believes

We believe that formulating a strategic plan developed by a strong alliance of midwifery leaders from across South and Southeast Asia and the Gulf States in Asia, where there is a high degree of commonality in terms of culture and challenges, creates an opportunity for donor agencies and development partners working in SRMNCAH to be more effective in their efforts to strengthen midwifery at the country and regional levels. MAA believes that those working in the field know their needs and challenges best.

We also believe that supporting midwives in their full scope of practice, including family planning, exclusive breastfeeding, immunisation, and nutrition to combat severe anaemia, is vital in addressing the Region's maternal and child health issues. Further, relicensing through CPD, lifelong learning, and a professional model of midwifery care and services are also critical in improving the quality of care and strengthening midwifery. MAA is committed to advocating for these initiatives to ensure midwives are empowered and supported in delivering comprehensive care.



We, as the Midwifery Association.

Reaffirm that mutual support can help bring about the transformative and innovative leadership needed to drive change and strengthen the midwifery workforce across the region, benefiting women, children, young and adolescent girls, and their families.

Pledge to work together to achieve the objectives of the Alliance:

- Advocate for every woman, adolescent girl and newborn in Asia to have access to respectful, quality, acceptable and affordable reproductive healthcare, recognising that global evidence shows 'Respectful Midwifery Care' is vital to sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child, adolescent health (SRMNCAH) and to provide such care requires sufficient numbers of professional midwives who are well educated, regulated, deployed where they are needed and retained.
- Promote women's general, sexual and reproductive health by disseminating best practice
- Promote professional midwifery practice and professional midwifery standards supported by the evidence-based practice to improve quality maternity services
- Identify and or develop appropriate Strategic Documents where they do not exist to do the above that can be shared and utilised by all members of MAA by reviewing international standards for Midwifery education, competencies and processes for the licensure (including relicensing) of midwifery practitioners within the region, and other relevant evidence-based tools and guidelines.
- Enhance the confidence, professional practice and influence of midwifery leaders to provide transformative, innovative and sustainability to drive the required change for the benefit of childbearing women and their families in their respective countries.

Commit to work collaboratively to achieve the Alliance's strategic priorities and implement the strategic Plan 2025-2050.



References



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