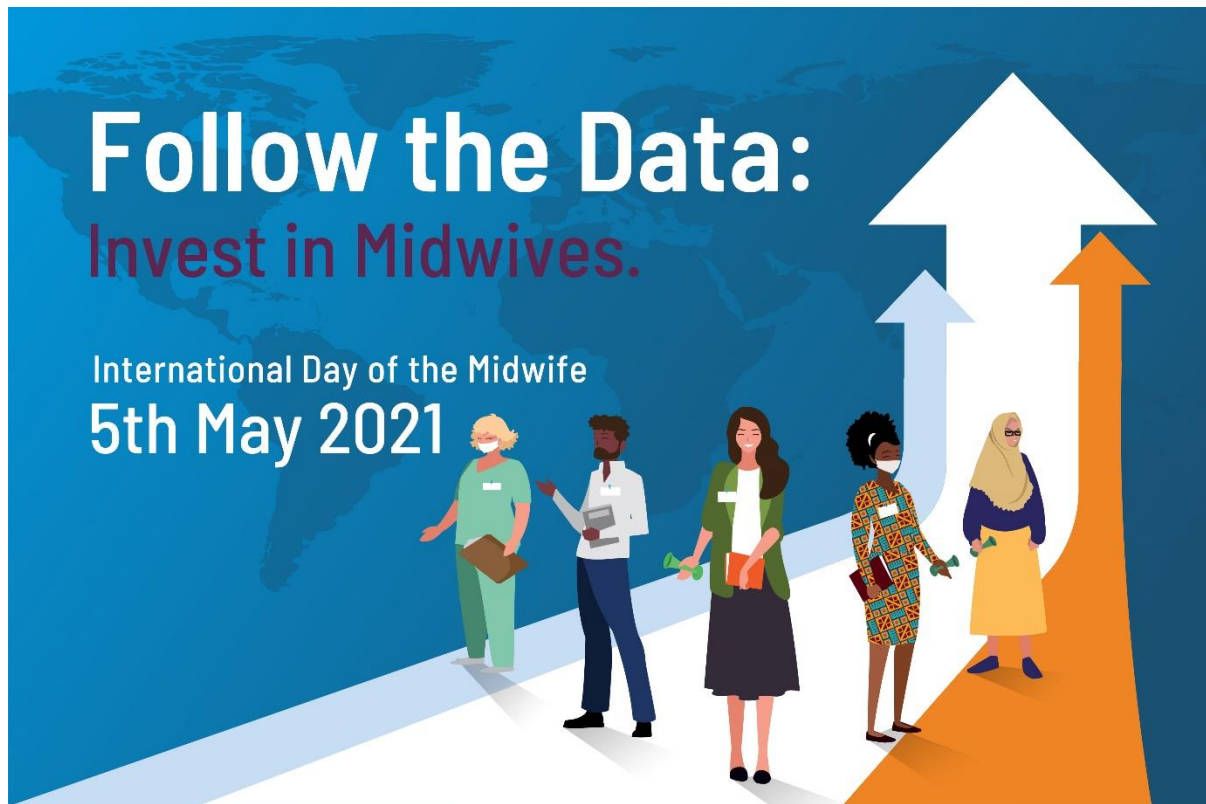




International Council of Nurses
The global voice of nursing



ICN celebrates International Day of the Midwife

Geneva, Switzerland, 5 May 2021 - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) joins in solidarity with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) to celebrate this year's International Day of the Midwife (IDM) today under the theme of *Follow the Data: Invest in Midwives*.

The day coincides with the launch of the [2021 State of the World's Midwifery Report](#) (SOWMy), co-led by ICM, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which provides an updated evidence base and detailed analysis on the impact of midwives on maternal and new-born health outcomes and the return on investment in midwives.

Annette Kennedy, ICN President said:

"ICN joins the ICM's call for investment in midwifery in order to save lives, improve health and strengthen health systems. The data in the new *State of the World's Midwifery Report* show clearly that investment in midwives is a key, cost-effective way to improve health outcomes for mothers and babies and reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and stillbirth."

The world is experiencing a shortage of 900,000 midwives, which has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. This could reverse decades of improvements in care and seriously threaten the likelihood of achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 3, Target 3.1 of reducing the global maternity mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030.

Ms Kennedy underlined the importance of data, saying:

“ICN has consistently called for the collection of data on healthcare worker infections and deaths during the pandemic in order to strengthen and protect the health workforce. This important data can be used to guide policy and strategy to save lives, ensure preparedness for future pandemics as well as defeat the current one.”

ICN has worked closely with ICM over many years and was pleased to be part of the development of the SOWMy report. ICN thanks the midwives of the world for their service to women and children and encourages governments to invest in midwives in recognition of their unique role. According to the ICM’s [2021 IDM Toolkit & Resource Pack](#), “Increased investment in midwives could save up to 4.3 million lives every year by averting 67% of maternal deaths, 64% of neonatal deaths, and 65% of stillbirths.”

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