

Press Statement

For immediate release:

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ADDRESS THE PLIGHTS OF MIDWIVES FOR A BETTER PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THEM, WOMEN AND FAMILIES.

Kampala – Uganda. Today, Center for Health, Human Rights and Development together with the Coalition to Stop Maternal Mortality in Uganda with support from the Advocacy for Better Health project on the eve of the International Day of the Midwife 2017 joins the rest of the world to commemorate this day under the theme: "*Midwives, Mothers & Families: Partners for life.*" As the coalition, we treasure the imperative role played by midwives in according care to women and their newborns during pregnancy, labor, childbirth and the post delivery period.

Over the past years, Uganda has made strides towards improving maternal mortality with the current indicators being at 336 per 100,000 live births and the pregnancy related maternal mortality (PRMR) being at 368 per 100,000 live births (Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016). Government is commended for making commitments at international level geared towards reduction of maternal mortality to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030 and at domestic level, reduction of maternal deaths to 15 per 100,000 live birth by 2010 and 119 per 100,000 live births by 2020 under Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan respectively.

Despite this progress and the various commitments, many of the maternal deaths are still attributed to preventable causes such as absence of critical cadres including midwives. Currently, absence of critical staff accounts for 35% of the maternal deaths and 48 % of that is attributed to shortage of midwives. (The Annual Health Sector Performance Report 2014/15). This human resource gap limits the interaction between midwives and mothers thus affecting Access to Information necessary for the mother during and after delivery.

For Uganda, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages among which includes reducing maternal and newborn mortality there is need to recruit, retain and motivate of midwives in health facilities.

The plights of these unsung heroes, have been forgotten and less attended to even with the current budget discussions that are underway for the financial year 2017/18. There is a large pool of midwives in the labour market whose services are not utilised. The issues regarding need to recruit, retain and motivate of midwives have not been given the necessary attention they deserve. "We call upon decision makers not to forget the countless effort made by the midwives in our country. When we invest in the midwives we are investing in our mothers and children" said Nsereko Ibrahim, programme officer CEHURD.

We therefore call for:

1. The need to recruit more midwives to address the imbalance in numbers between the midwives, women and the newborns in their care.
2. The need to provide materials and equipments needed for the midwives to undertake their work.

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