



Bangladesh Midwifery Society (BMS)

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Message from the President

It is a privilege to say a few words as President of the Bangladesh Midwifery Society. Today on International Day of the Midwife we are celebrating the 100th birthday of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and also celebrating “A 10-year journey of midwifery in Bangladesh”.

Midwives can provide around 90% of the care that women, adolescents and newborns need yet they account for less than 10% of the sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health workforce around the world. In fact, there is a global shortage of almost one million midwives. Investing in midwives would save millions of lives every year, would improve national and global economies and would contribute to women’s empowerment and gender equality¹.



The Bangladesh Midwifery Society was founded in 2010 to advocate for the introduction of professional midwives in Bangladesh. We honour our founding president, Halima Akhter and other founding members who had a vision for midwifery and worked so hard with the government of Bangladesh, UNFPA and many other partners to make their dream a reality.

In 2017, BMS was privileged to begin an international twinning partnership with the Royal College of Midwives (RCM). During this partnership our systems and structures have undergone a digital transformation, we have developed a new constitution approved by the Department of Women’s Affairs and have held fair, participatory elections for our executive committee. I am proud to say that I, as President of BMS, am a midwife and all of our executive committee are also midwives. BMS is now an organisation for midwives, run by midwives, in which midwives have a voice and a vision that every women in Bangladesh will have access to a midwife’s care.

We are proud of all our midwives in Bangladesh, working so hard in remote and difficult settings with the support of our medical and nursing colleagues, now providing the majority of maternity care for women and their families in the Upazila Health Complexes. We are proud to be a part of the global midwifery community, with seven midwives from Bangladesh now taking part in International Leadership Development Programmes through the ICM and Nursing Now.

We call upon the Government of Bangladesh and our respected development partners to continue supporting and investing in midwives in Bangladesh. There remains much to be done. Not only do we need more midwives, but midwives must work in an enabling environment where they have respect from their professional colleagues and where they feel safe. As women, midwives risk violence every day and many midwives have already lost their lives through violence. Together with their families, we mourn their loss and pledge to make our society a better place where women have equal opportunity. As BMS we are proud to have developed positive relationships with women’s organisations and maternity service users and look forward to working with them in deeper partnership.

We must have midwives at leaders at every level. Midwives must have equal opportunity to access higher education and a strong career framework. Let’s continue to work together to achieve these goals, as we celebrate with midwives around the world everything that midwives are achieving to make a difference and to achieve the global development goals.

Thank you.

Asma Khater

President, Bangladesh Midwifery Society (BMS)

¹ Data from State of the World’s Midwifery Report 2021

BMS is supported by:

