

One Million More Midwives: a Professional and Systemic Responsibility

Silvia Vaccari

President of the National Federation of the Councils of Midwifery Profession (FNOPO), Rome, Italy

Corresponding author: Silvia Vaccari; e-mail: s.vaccari@fnopo.it

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The International Day of the Midwife 2026 takes place in a global context that calls for an urgent and unavoidable reflection on the strategic role of the midwifery profession within contemporary healthcare systems. The theme “One Million More Midwives” reflects a well-established reality: without adequate investment in the midwifery workforce, it will not be possible to ensure safe, equitable, and sustainable levels of care. International estimates indicate a need for approximately one million additional midwives worldwide. This figure should not be interpreted merely as a staffing shortage, but rather as a structural indicator of the fragility of healthcare systems in their capacity to meet sexual, reproductive, maternal, and neonatal health needs. The uneven distribution of human resources, insufficient workforce planning in education and training, and the limited recognition of the profession all contribute to a complex situation that requires coordinated and sustained interventions at both international and national levels.

Available scientific evidence consistently shows that midwife-led models of care are associated with improved outcomes for women and newborns. Continuity of care, a personalized approach, and integration within multidisciplinary pathways are key determinants of care quality. However, these outcomes cannot be fully achieved without an adequate number of professionals and without organizational systems able to enhance their skills and autonomy.

The issue, in fact, is not exclusively quantitative. The shortage of midwives is closely related to the quality of work, job stability, recognition of advanced competencies, and the development of professional leadership. In many healthcare settings, midwives are not yet fully integrated into decision-making processes, despite their central role in the health pathways of women and families. In this sense, the International Day of the Midwife takes on a significance that goes beyond celebration. It becomes an opportunity to reaffirm the deeply strategic nature of the profession and to draw attention to the need for

forward-looking health policies able to invest in education, employment, and professional development.

The “One Million More Midwives” campaign promoted by the International Confederation of Midwives is not merely a numerical target, but a vision of global health that places equity, quality of care, and recognition of the value of midwives at its core. Reducing inequalities and improving maternal and child health outcomes depend largely on the ability of healthcare systems to strengthen this profession in a structural and continuous way.

The challenge we face today concerns not only the present, but above all the future. Investing in midwives means investing in the sustainability of healthcare systems, the safety of care, and the protection of the rights of women and future generations. It is a responsibility that involves institutions, the scientific community, and the profession itself, and it requires a shared and concrete vision. From this perspective, the International Day of the Midwife 2026 represents a moment of awareness and commitment: not a point of arrival, but a necessary step to reaffirm that global health inevitably depends on strengthening the midwifery profession.

Silvia Vaccari
President FNOPO
