

5 June 2010

International Forum Statement on DFID press release: British nurses, doctors and health workers to join global fight to reduce maternal deaths

The International Forum of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges warmly welcomes this very tangible demonstration of support for UK healthcare staff to contribute to the education, training and quality assurance of local clinical healthcare workers. The trajectory to achieving the maternal Millennium Development Goal is far short of what had been hoped for.

The timing is helpful because this provides the opportunity for harness the energy and collaborative working between many UK institutions and the NHS, which has often suffered in the past from fragmentation of initiatives, missed opportunities and poor academic planning in terms of design, ethos, delivery and evaluation of effectiveness.

Members of the International Forum, such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have already achieved much with little resources or formal support. The RCOG *Life Saving Skills –Essential Obstetric Care and Newborn Care* provides an excellent example of a structured and quality assured training programme, delivered on site, whose ethos is for Training the local Trainers, to in turn teach the generic knowledge, skills and values, refined for the local circumstances. This programme has already trained some 700 health workers in sub-Saharan Africa.

<http://www.rcog.org.uk/what-we-do/international-development/life-saving-skills>

With more resources, such programmes can be further developed and expanded.

International Forum Members are drawn from all the Medical and the Nursing and the Midwifery Royal Colleges, providing a synthesis of support from the clinical Obstetric, Paediatric, Anaesthetist, Radiologist, and Pathologist specialists, the generalist Family Doctors/General Practitioners, Midwives, Nurses and other birth attendants. It is often overlooked that UK health professionals feel a responsibility to assist those less fortunate colleagues who are struggling to provide healthcare in very difficult circumstance.

The money can be used purposefully to assist the planned release of appropriate UK health professionals, who are often working full time in the NHS. Furthermore, there are now opportunities to support the training of selected local healthcare workers to gain further experience in the UK and cementing a long term relationship between like minded colleagues.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John V. Howard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Dr John V Howard FRCGP
Medical Director, MRCGP[INT] programme
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