

# Strengthen midwives' leadership to fix Uganda's health system

salute all the nurses and midwives on this occasion of the International Day of the Midwife. We also appreciate the sacrifices the profession goes through, and the challenges faced in the provision of midwifery services in the country. I would wish to put it plainly that, it's a 'strong grip but with a weak Arm'. We need more power in this grip: Leadership and governance of the sector.

Over the years, the sector has evolved progressively to tackle the leadership and governance of this sector, but the 'grip' needs a firm support. No doubt that a bigger proportion of the services provided in the health sector are either directly or indirectly linked to nursing and midwifery. The provision of care – whether promotive, preventive curative or rehabilitative – has been defining the sector. The administration of new technologies to care, for example, immunisation and survival strategy in early childhood;

maternal well-being from pregnancy communication, childbirth and child health is in the hands of the firm grip of the midwives and the nurses: we only need to improve the grip. This has been a proven societal trust and trust for Government through policy.

However, what has not been explicit is the mainstream leadership and governance of the sector through laid down incorporation in the development of national health policy.

Let's draw our attention to the World Health Assembly Resolution 74.15: Strengthening nursing and midwifery: Investments in education, jobs, leadership and service delivery. The resolution strongly urges member states to consider appointing heads of nurses and midwives in senior leadership in order to strengthen



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senior leadership roles.

Uganda, a member state, has taken greater steps in addressing this. Although the role of heads of nurses and midwives exists in most hospitals and facilities, there is a need to strengthen it. This should come with a policy environment to strengthen it, empower the leaders, recognise their strategic role in human resources for health agenda, and expanding the contribution of nursing and midwifery towards achieving more resilient and equitable health systems.

Both public and private heads of nursing and midwifery are professionals with policy and management roles responsible for supporting government agenda in strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce and providing leadership and advice.

The implementation of this role is important to ensure that health policies take into account the experience of nurses and midwives.

The WHA Resolution was specific in that it advocates for increase in female representation in leadership positions, strengthen governance in human resources for health by establishing co-ordination between levels and inter-professional and inter-sectoral actions. It also looks at implementing actions and programmes that strengthen the regulatory framework, education and working conditions for the professionals.

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