PRESS RELEASE

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Afghan Midwives Association Holds 11th Annual Congress

HERAT, AFGHANISTAN---The Afghan Midwives Association (AMA) held its 11th annual congress to discuss ways to improve maternal and newborn health. This year's theme was "*Midwives for a Better tomorrow,"* highlighting the contribution of midwifery to improving health outcomes in Afghanistan.

Mohammad Asif Rahimi, Herat's governor and Dr. Najia Tareq, Ministry of Public Health Deputy Minister for Service Provision opened the congress. Over 350 people attended the two-day event. The AMA Congress brings together maternal and child health policymakers, providers and recipients annually and is the largest event of its type in Afghanistan.

Gov. Rahimi praised the midwives for their sacrifice serving those most in need. "I am sure that your profession is full of challenges and problems," said Gov. Rahimi. "You are serving in rural areas where basic comforts are not available for you and your families,. But you have shifted your families to those places and serve your nation proudly."

Delivering remarks via video, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Health and Nutrition Office Director celebrated the midwives. "Time and again, , midwives have proven their capability to support and provide one of the most basic rights: respectful care and skilled services for women during labor and delivery."

The Congress supports an open exchange of information for AMA members and partners on international advancements in midwifery and maternity services. It promotes collaboration with international midwifery communities and donors. Day Two featured a "Mini University" skills training, focused on teaching high-impact interventions to prevent maternal and child death.

The AMA was established in 2005 with 15 members. Today, it has over 3,000 members throughout Afghanistan who are professional midwives or midwifery students. The USAID-funded Hemayat project technically and financially supports the AMA to host the congress along with other international donors.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years."