



**FIGO**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF  
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

## FIGO reaffirms support: World Prematurity Day

(17 November 2015)

The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) reaffirms its support for the highlighting of *World Prematurity Day* on 17 November 2015.

FIGO's overall goal is to improve the health and wellbeing of women and newborn children worldwide. Therefore it is committed to the achievement of the new global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.2 that focuses on ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age.

Professor C N Purandare, FIGO President, said: 'There is no doubt that preterm birth is a critical area of concern with regard to newborn, infant and child health - every year, 15 million babies are born preterm. Complications arising from this are the leading cause of death among children under five years. It is a sobering fact that three-quarters of those affected could be saved with accessible, cost-effective interventions such as the administration of corticosteroids, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) and Kangaroo Mother Care, for example.'

FIGO is also committed to preventative strategies, which include family planning, and increased empowerment of women; improved quality of care before, between and during pregnancy; prevention and screening/management of STIs; education and health promotion for girls and women; promotion of healthy nutrition, including micronutrient fortification; addressing life-style risks such as smoking and environmental risks such as indoor air pollution; and screening and management of pregnant women at highest risk of preterm birth eg those with multiple pregnancies; diabetes; high blood pressure; and history of previous preterm birth.

FIGO has forged a valuable alliance with March of Dimes (MOD) to look into how to act to reduce the burden of preterm birth: the FIGO Working Group on Preterm Birth. Ongoing epidemiological research being conducted jointly by MOD and FIGO looks into major factors and associations that may help to focus on specific issues for research and clinical action. Prevention of prematurity in selected cases and treatment of those born preterm are key components to reduce morbidity and mortality in this vulnerable group. This Working Group works closely with another FIGO Working Group on Best Practice in Maternal-Foetal Medicine in this regard.

FIGO is also committed to encouraging collaborative action between obstetricians, midwives and paediatricians in managing preterm birth. This is illustrated through FIGO's joint project with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and the International Pediatric Association (IPA) - 'Improving the Quality of Maternal and Newborn Healthcare Services Through Accelerated Implementation of the Essential Interventions by the Healthcare Professionals' Associations' - in selected health facilities in Uganda and Indonesia.

### **Sources/resources:**

- \*Born Too Soon: The Global Action Report on Preterm Birth: [www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/preterm\\_birth\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/pmnch/media/news/2012/preterm_birth_report/en/)
- Every Newborn Toolkit: [www.everynewborn.org/every-newborn-toolkit/](http://www.everynewborn.org/every-newborn-toolkit/)
- The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI): <http://www.efcni.org/>
- <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs363/en/>