Pre-Congress bookings have been around 1,000 for the past three Congresses and resulted in attendances of 3,500 to 3,700. This time around, final attendance is likely to burst through the 4,000 mark for an all-time country attendance record, at an ICM triennial Congress.

The growing reputation of the Congress as the premier and largest global midwifery event has led to this increased attendance. A survey from the last ICM Congress revealed that nearly 50% of midwives attended for professional and personal development. The second most popular reason for attending an ICM Congress was the scientific programme. Frances Ganges, ICM Chief Executive, is delighted to report that ‘the standard of abstract papers submitted and accepted is at the highest level’.

To be part of the record-breaking congress audience, visit www.midwives2017.org to book at the early bird registration rate. President Frances Day-Stirk suggests that this is the time, ‘to plan and prepare for what is likely to be an unmissable and scintillating event for midwives’.

1500 Sign up for Toronto with 11 months to go

Midwives from over 80 countries have already registered for the ICM Congress in Toronto next June, 18-22. ‘This is the largest number of pre-bookings ever, at this stage’ said Congress manager Malcolm MacMillan, “It indicates a huge final attendance.”
Following a year of hard work by the ICM Scientific Programme Committee, (SPPC) submitted abstracts have been through a rigorous peer review process, resulting in the acceptance of 705 oral presentations. In addition, over 500 posters have been accepted.

Co-chair of the SPPC, Karen Guilliland praised the standard of the 1,650 submitted abstract papers from 74 countries and thanked peer reviewers across the globe for their diligent marking. “The high standard of submissions has led to record breaking acceptance levels and a scientific programme of an exceptional standard”.

The SPPC team of eight distinguished midwives are currently working on populating the scientific programme. An on-line version is to be posted on the Congress website in late November.

The Canada factor
Following a successful support system facilitated by the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) their 1700 members produced a staggering 49 posters and 79 oral abstracts. Tonia Occhionero, CAM Executive Director, was delighted with the results as an outcome of the planning committee efforts “especially having the highest number of Symposia accepted. Our members have ensured that Congress delegates will have a wide range of Canadian midwifery issues within the Scientific programme”.

Stats & Facts
With 11 Symposia from Canada, delegates will be able to choose subjects like ‘valuing the labour of midwives’ or ‘outcomes of midwifery care in Indigenous communities’ or ‘making a difference on remote Inuit communities’.

Twenty-four countries, such as Bangladesh, Rwanda, Croatia, and Jamaica will present one or two abstracts while at the other end of the scale, each with over 90 presentations are UK, Australia, Japan and USA. For the first time a significant South American presence is evident with 40 accepted abstracts from 6 countries, led by Brazil and Chile. With 72% of all submitted oral and poster abstracts being accepted, the ICM Toronto Congress can claim another amazing break-through.

MARCH FOR MORE MIDWIVES
ON SATURDAY 17th JUNE 2017 at 14hr00

Thousands of midwives are being urged to attend the March for More Midwives on Saturday 17 June, the day before the opening of Congress to support the ICM in its call for more midwives, globally. A grand March through Toronto has been agreed by city officials, announcing that the world’s midwives are gathering in Toronto. High on their Congress agenda is the need for more midwives to reduce maternal and newborn mortality. Frances Ganges, ICM Chief Executive, emphasized, “All the evidence shows that where there are sufficient and well educated midwives, the lives of more mothers and babies can be saved”.

The event will be an amazing curtain raiser for the Congress with walkers from 120 countries parading flags and banners in colorful costumes. Midwives are also being asked to bring drums from their country to play along the route. The 3k walk will start near the Congress venue-The MTCC South Building (exact location to be confirmed) and end outside City Hall at Nathan Phillips Square with a mass drumming and dancing display.

Arrangements: book your flights to arrive early so that you can register at the Congress Centre (MTCC South Building) on the morning of Saturday 17 June 2017. Special T-shirts will be on sale. Meet from 13hr00 at the nearby park area, to begin the walk at 14hr00.

Regular updates will be posted on the Congress website.
Where to Stay: A Hotel Review

Hotels in Toronto can get booked quickly so we strongly recommend making your reservations early. To ensure rooms remain available for delegates, ICM has reserved blocks of rooms in a variety of hotels. We have tried to ensure good value at different price points with a reasonable standard of facilities. Go to www.midwives2017.org to book and remember that breakfast is not usually included in North American hotels. You will also need to add 13% tax.

HILTON TORONTO: classed as a 4* hotel about a 15-minute walk to the Congress Centre.

A taxi at today’s price is likely to be around $8 – a reasonable deal if shared. The $229 CAD rate for a King or 2 double beds provides good quality accommodation at an excellent rate, especially if sharing in a 2 double bedded room. An early booking discount of $10 CAD a room per night on the above price offers added value. Complimentary internet and 10% off restaurant prices.

Comment: the double bedded rooms are spacious and good value with the room discount. This hotel is likely to be very popular.

CHESTNUT UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE: is 1.7 k from the Congress Centre

This is one of the best university residences on offer compared with previous Congresses; the student rooms are basic, comfortable, clean and in good condition. At a 2* standard and only a 10-minute trip by public transit the price of $139 CAD for a single or double room is by far a good budget price, especially as breakfast is included. Spacious breakfast room and amenity spaces.

Comment: best budget accommodation on offer for any Congress, especially if sharing at a cost of less than €50 per person with breakfast.

Who’s Who on the ICM Board

In each issue of Congress E-news, we provide a short profile of Board members. Here, we feature SUE BREE, one of the Asia Pacific representatives and Dr. Rita Borg Xuereb representing Southern Europe.

Sue Bree

Sue Bree works in a rural community in New Zealand as a self-employed midwife within the publicly funded maternity system. For the past 26 years she has provided full continuity of care to her own caseload of women. She acknowledges the challenges facing childbearing women and midwives in many countries yet still believes that well educated midwives working within the midwifery scope of practice are the answer.

Rita Borg Xuereb

Rita Borg Xuereb is Head of the Department of Midwifery, a senior lecturer and researcher with the University of Malta. She was responsible for developing and setting up the Department of Midwifery in 2009. She was also a member of the 2013 reference network as a Midwifery Academic expert. Rita has represented ICM at WHO, UNFPA, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation projects and is a core-team member for updating the ICM Basic Essential Competencies for Midwives.
Where to Stay: A Hotel Review

WESTIN HARBOUR CASTLE ICM HQ HOTEL: Undoubtedly the pick of hotels when it comes to location and best setting on the shores of Lake Ontario.

Lovely walks along the waterfront or watching the tourists sail over to Toronto Island. This 4* hotel has nearly 1000 rooms in two tower blocks and is about 12-minute walk to the Congress venue or a short taxi ride. Early booking, prior to 31 December 2016, attracts a $10 dollar a night discount. Thereafter the room rate is $229 per night for a traditional room with two double beds or a standard room with one king size bed. When booking ask for a Traditional Room. The hotel features a large breakfast room (additional charge), a bar restaurant with good quality food, a foyer coffee bar. There is a well-equipped gym and a heated indoor swimming pool.

Comment: good value for its location; a large, buzzing hotel. Ask for a refurbished lake-side view.

BOND PLACE HOTEL: a 3* hotel offering a variety of rooms to suit your budget; a 7 minute taxi ride or a 15/20-minute walk to the Congress venue.

Located in downtown Toronto near the famous Eaton Centre, offering rates ranging from $159 – 179 for a standard 2 twin bed room up to a superior room with 2 or 3 beds. The facilities are what you expect from a 3* hotel: each room has air conditioning and a mini fridge. Mediterranean specialties, pizza and vegetarian dishes are some of the dinner options at PomAnar Grill. Guests can watch chefs preparing their dinner on an open grill.

Comment: An ideal budget priced hotel for two sharing. Not on the Congress Centre doorstep but located in an exciting and busy part of Toronto. Ask for a quote on a Double Deluxe two-bedded Room as this provides a bigger space.

AGM, Conference & Exhibit
The Fairmont Empress Hotel, Victoria, BC

Don’t miss our annual conference this year. The next one isn’t until 2018!
Register before September 1st and save $75!
Register at: http://www.canadianmidwives.org/conference/registration.html
For our full program and list of partners & exhibitors, go to our mobile app: https://eventmobi.com/2016camconf/
We look forward to seeing you in Victoria!
Where to Stay: A Hotel Review

**OMNI KING EDWARD HOTEL:** A 4* hotel about a 12-minute walk to the Congress Centre

Great value in a quality hotel with spacious 1 bed deluxe room costing $199 CAD or 2 bed deluxe at $219 CAD (a great deal for sharing). Complimentary internet and access to gym. On site spa and hairdressers.

Comment: my favorite; book quickly as they have allocated a limited number of rooms.

**CHELSEA HOTEL:** located within walking distance of the city subway and 15 minutes by public transit to the Congress Centre.

Offers rates from $175-245 CAD for a generous sized room to a studio kitchenette which sleeps 3-4 people. The hotel with 680 rooms with a market garden buffet restaurant with fresh produce, a coffee shop and a fine-dining restaurant. Set in a lively downtown Toronto.

Comment: one of my favourites with a good value room rate. If you want pampering and peace, choose another hotel. Good information to be found on the hotel’s website: request a price for a Chelsea Room.

**FAIRMONT ROYAL YORK:** 4* in the heart of downtown Toronto, an 8-minute walk (600 metres) to Congress Centre.

Across from main Union station entrance. Rooms are spacious and elegantly designed, some with bathtub and some with shower only. Room renovation plan of over 1000 rooms over 11 floors should be finished by the Congress date. Hotel boasts a Spa, fitness centre and indoor pool. Choice of restaurants from gastro pub to fine dining.

Comment: one of the more expensive hotels but becomes excellent value if sharing a double/double room. Push the boat-out for a deluxe room and ask for a city view.

**HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN:** 3* location; location; location

18 minutes from the Congress Centre by public transport or 7 mins by cab. Standard rooms, Executive rooms with king bed or double beds, all with complementary Wi-Fi. Has a Spa overlooking a heated indoor pool. Restaurant bar and good buffet breakfast.

Comment: some of the rooms are a bit compact but for 3 star prices the facilities are good. Many attractions are within walking distance or a short journey on public transport.

**NOVOTEL TORONTO CENTRE:** a 3* hotel with a fitness centre and small pool in the trendy St Lawrence district.

A 16-minute walk to conference centre, 7 mins in a taxi or 15 mins using public transport. Standard or executive rooms are spacious compared to other 3 star hotels. Café attached serving breakfast and dinner as well as a lounge bar with a snack menu

Comment: a nice contemporary hotel with only a short walk to Union station and subway; for a 3 star hotel the facilities are very good value.
What to do: Tour Information

ACCOMPANYING PERSONS TOUR

Toronto Tour with Cruise and Casa Loma on Tuesday 20th June at 08hr30

*This tour is for accompanying persons only and is included in the registration fee. Please note, there is no additional charge.

The exclusive accompanying person, half-day, tour will take you to the beautiful Toronto waterfront and historic Casa Loma.

After a short transfer to the docks, you will take the boat for a 45-minute sightseeing cruise in the tranquil waters of Toronto’s harbor. After which you will experience a short city tour, then transfer to Casa Loma for a tour of Toronto’s original Castle. The former home of Canadian Financier Sir Henry Pellatt, the castle is complete with decorated suites, secret passages, an 800-foot tunnel, towers, stables, and beautiful 5-acre estate garden.

This tour is full of Toronto highlights and not to be missed!

POST CONGRESS TOURS

At each Congress, ICM offers a range of post Congress tours as well as half day trips to ‘discover’ Toronto. We know that many delegates add on a few days holiday and it is with this group in mind that the following trips are provided. For those enjoying an extended holiday and wanting to see more of Canada, refer to contacts at the website www@midwives2017.org

HALF DAY TRIPS

WELCOME TO TORONTO - SUNDAY 18TH AT 08HR30

This is the only pre-congress half day tour; held on the Sunday morning of the opening ceremony. Over a 3.5 hour period, you will discover the famous attractions the city has to offer, including a stop at the wonderful Kensington Market; Great value and a great way to spend Sunday morning.

ABORIGINAL HISTORY TOUR - SUNDAY 24TH AT 09HR00

Not to be missed if wanting a snap-shot on Aboriginal culture and heritage. Join the private 4-hour tour with 2 Indigenous guides that are grounded in their cultural traditions and are fascinating storytellers and travel to Rouge Park, east Toronto, known as Canada’s premier urban wilderness park. This tour blends teachings on Indigenous culture, politics and heritage that rests in places throughout the city dating from 12,000 years ago up to the present.
What to do: Tour Information

POST CONGRESS TOURS

ONE-DAY TRIPS

NIAGARA FALLS AND WINERY
A great value package – and a must do - for those with only a day or two to spare. It’s a short 90-minute coach trip through some beautiful scenery. Upon arrival, you will enjoy the thunder of the waters as you board the Hornblower Cruise. Experience the breathtaking flow of water, power and mist that form the spectacular Niagara Falls and then have a buffet lunch, overlooking the Falls. Next, it’s a brief stop at the beautiful village of Niagara-on-the-Lake, one of the oldest settlements in Ontario and famous for the War of 1812 between Canada and the United States. Before returning to Toronto, there is a stop at a local winery to taste three delicious wines produced in Canada.

SIX NATIONS BIRTHING CENTRE AND BOTANICAL GARDENS
The Six Nations consist of Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Onondaga and Tuscarora and were unified under the Great Tree of Peace! A local guide will provide a tour of the Six Nations Birthing Centre, followed by a wonderful lunch experience on the reserve with local fresh food. In the afternoon, you will have the opportunity to visit the Iroqrafts gift store offering authentic aboriginal gifts. On the way back to Toronto, there is a stop in Hamilton for a visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens, the largest in Canada.

TWO-DAY TRIPS

1000 ISLANDS TWO-DAY DISCOVERY
This two-day tour to historic Kingston, Ontario is ideal for those want a mix of history, spectacular scenery, wine tasting and unique shopping opportunities. Following the luxury coach transfer to Kingston you then start your fabulous cruise which includes cruising past Boldt Castle, the lavish homes of the rich and famous; Zavikon Islands with the smallest international bridge in the world; and, the Canadian Palisades where a statue of St. Lawrence watches over the river. After hotel check-in dinner is served overlooking the waterfront of historic Kingston, Ontario. The next morning, there is historical tour of both Kingston and Fort Henry. The return transfer to Toronto provides an opportunity for world class shopping and wine tasting at an award winning winery in Prince Edward County.

NIAGARA TWO-DAY
A much more leisurely approach to the one-day tour where you wake up to the gorgeous views of the Falls then head for some quality free time at the historic Niagara-on-the-Lake. An opportunity to explore the area before lunch at the famous Queens Landing. After your amazing lunch it’s off to a local winery for a tour to learn the secrets of making fine wine and of course, a sampling session!

CONGRESS SECRETARIAT
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