



FIGO
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

'Women's Health and Rights'

Foreword by Professor Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, FIGO President

It is a great pleasure and privilege to write a foreword for 'On Women's Health and Rights' - a compilation of lectures, speeches, statements and quotations by Professor Mahmoud Fathalla, unarguably the greatest Women's Health Rights champion in the last century. Fondly known as 'Prof' to juniors and as 'Mahmoud' to his peers, he has dedicated his life to Women's Health and Rights. His lectures, full of emotion, inspire people to follow his path. His teaching - looking at women's health in a holistic and person-centred way - is fully reflected in his myriad lectures and statements. He is therefore well known for his capacity to mobilise global organisations to take forward effective 'Safe Motherhood' action plans.

The landmark film 'Why did Mrs X die?' (the updated version of which was premiered at the FIGO World Congress in Rome, 2012) has prompted food for thought from politicians, policymakers and healthcare providers, encouraging them to take appropriate actions to save women's lives. His penetrating observation: 'Women are not dying because of diseases we cannot treat. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving', is used by many speakers and has been a powerful tool in arguing for funding to provide women's health services. One of the key questions raised to policymakers is: 'How much is a woman's life worth?'

This compilation of Professor Fathalla's lectures, speeches and statements will motivate those who read it to accelerate their contributions to Women's Health and Rights. He has generously provided this for FIGO to disseminate widely - we are truly grateful.

FIGO and the World Health Organization (WHO) have been inextricably linked to his life. He has served FIGO in many areas, including as Vice President and then President. From my observations over the last three decades, he has shifted the focus of this prestigious organisation to do even greater work through advocacy and also through projects and programmes with Member Societies, so that women benefit both 'on the ground' and at 'grassroots' levels.

At a personal level, Professor Fathalla has been a mentor, teacher, friend and guide - I am sure many others who know him would also express this sentiment.

In recognition of his great contributions, FIGO has designated one of its Congress plenary lectures the 'Mahmoud Fathalla' lecture. I have no doubt that the compilation he has given to FIGO will inspire everyone to be a champion of Women's Health and Rights.

Yours sincerely

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