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Malaysia to host conference on women issues

The 3rd Global Women Deliver Conference 2013 will be held here

BY SOPHIA HALIM

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LEADING experts in maternal and maternity issues will meet in Malaysia next year for the 3rd Global Women Deliver Conference 2013, organised by Women Deliver, a global advocacy organisation headquartered in New York.

This conference was previously held in London and Washington DC, and Malaysia is the first Asian country to be given the honour to play host although the date and venue has yet to be announced.

Launched in 2007, the conference brings together views from around the world to call for action against maternal deaths with a mission to generate political commitment and financial investment for fulfilling Millennium Development Goal 5, that is, to reduce maternal mortality and achieve universal access to reproductive health.

Supported by the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau, Malaysia was chosen to be the host country due to its status as a fast-growing democratic and liberal progressive country with stability and sound socio-economic and developmental policies.

“With this conference, Malaysia will have an opportunity to share its experience with other less-developed countries with high maternal mortality and learn of new advances and modern technology that can save

women’s lives and improve their health,” said Women Deliver consultant Datuk Dr Raj Karim.

“Furthermore, the conference provides a platform for participating countries to share their experiences on the elimination of poverty, empowerment of women and education of girls which are crucial to improving women’s health.”

Women Deliver recently announced the Women Deliver 50 programme, a compilation of the 50 most inspiring ideas and solutions for girls and women across the globe. The list showcases advocacy campaigns, health interventions, technologies, educational initiatives and leadership programmes.

The initiatives, which range from grassroots to global, are led by social entrepreneurs, civil society, governments, international agencies and private companies.

Some of the solutions featured in Women Deliver 50 include:

- Backpack Farm in Kenya and newly-independent South Sudan. From certified seeds to safety equipment, Backpack Farm is giving small-scale farmers, many of whom are women, everything they need to improve crop production, all in a backpack. This pioneering social enterprise model increases the quality and quantity of produce harvested by women, which allows women to earn more money to invest in their family’s education and health and their community’s needs.

- Hamlin College of Mid-

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wives in Ethiopia. This is

aimed at addressing the critical shortage of midwives in rural communities in Ethiopia. The college provides promising students from five different regions with an intensive, four-year training programme on labour and delivery, antenatal and postnatal care, family planning, HIV/AIDS counselling and testing, and information technology (IT).

• Abriendo Oportunidades in Guatemala. This programme by the Population Council is helping to raise indigenous Mayan girls – one of Guatemala’s most disadvantaged groups – out of poverty. Since 2004, the programme has provided more than 3,000 girls with mentorship, personal and professional development skills and leadership oppor-

tunities.
For more information, visit www.womendeliver.org.



WOMEN POWER: (from left) Women Deliver consultant Datuk Dr Raj Karim, and New York-based Women Deliver president Jill Sheffield