

Honourable Madam Director-General, Regional Directors, Honourable Ministers, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

Let me express my sincere thanks to the founder of the prize – the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation, to the members of the Selection Panel and the members of the Executive Board for their decision to award our organization with the Sasakawa Health Prize.

I would like to thank all the people who have worked for our Foundation for last 20 years and all women whose voice had the power of a change.

For 20 years we have struggled for the respect and dignity in childbirth to enable women in Poland to decide where, how and with whom they will give birth to their children. “To know is to choose” – this is our motto.

We provide women with a reliable information to help them make a conscious choice. We have built the portal www.GdzieRodzic.info (WhereToGiveBirth.info) to publish the official statistics and information submitted by hospitals. Women can evaluate the care and share their experiences in childbirth. We have believed that by making the women’s experiences and their evaluations public the perinatal care in Poland will improve and that this voice will be heard. And that has happened. We have struggled for transparency and access to public information on mother and child care.

It was not an easy path. Nobody in Poland believed in that project and nobody wanted to finance it. The hospitals did not want to give information. We have raised the money ourselves and we had to take legal actions to gain the information from hospitals. And we have won! Our web page is visited by 100 000 people every month.

Our aim is to achieve the health care based on friendliness, professionalism, empathy, individual attitude, respect for the women’s needs and their choices. To make it happen there is needed the involvement from the governments, international institutions, NGOs, midwives, doctors and the women themselves.

The award is not only for us, it is for all organizations all over the world that struggle for a high quality maternal and child care – the care respecting human rights focusing on a mother and child.

Because the way we are born into this world influences whole our lives.