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# Beter Bevallen

Amsterdam, the Netherlands  
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To all of those who feel concerned about obstetrics and who are interested in active birth, Holland must seem a paradise:

- women are able to choose the place of birth and about one third of all deliveries actually are homebirths;
- midwives work independently and are highly respected;
- hospitals must compete with all the advantages of the home situation; compared to other countries, they usually have a non-aggressive approach to childbirth;
- the rate of perinatal death is low; it ranges among the lowest in the world.

However, also in the Netherlands, developments are taking place that will eventually block the possibilities for active birth. It seems as if Holland wants to get rid of its 'backwardness' as fast as possible: gynaecologists overtly comment on homebirth as being obsolete; chemicals are more and more used in the treatment of pain; the number of artificial deliveries is rising, and the percentage of home-deliveries over the past 10 years has drastically declined.

Consumers and midwives concerned about these developments started the 'Beter Bevallen' movement. Last January we held a conference which proved to be a great succes and which was extensively covered by the media. Talking to participants, especially women from other countries, we realised that consumers everywhere are making themselves heard. In the field of obstetrics their influence is being clearly felt. In countries all over the world women are standing up, demanding birth with dignity, and a delivery they can really call their own.

This is the reason why we want to organise an international platform where consumers, midwives and movements fighting for the possibility of active birth can meet and inspire each other.

**place:** Amsterdam, the Netherlands

**time and date:** a few days before the international conference of midwives, which will be held in August 1987, in The Hague, Holland. Our meeting will not overlap the midwives' conference.

If you feel just as excited about this idea as we do, please let us know. Send us your papers, pamphlets, your ideas—and keep in contact. We need you to make this plan come true.

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