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**Statement submitted by Days for Girls International, International
Planned Parenthood Federation, East and Southeast Asia and
Oceania Region (IPPF ESEAOR), Plan International, Inc., Save the
Children International, Stichting Simavi, Wash United gGmbH,
WaterAid, and Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights,
non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

We, as members of the Global Menstrual Collective, are committed to contributing towards gender equality, empowerment of girls and women, and realizing the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Comprehensive menstrual health and hygiene is fundamental to the Beijing Platform for Action's objectives on providing reproductive health information and services, removing obstacles for women and girls in decision making, tackling discrimination that women face in workplaces and communities, providing girls with equal education and women with economic opportunities, and tackling early marriage and unintended pregnancy.

Menstruation is a normal biological process and a vital sign of health. However, menstruation is shrouded in stigma, with millions of women, girls and people with gender diverse identities who menstruate, negatively affected by inequitable social norms, discriminatory policies and practices, and inadequate menstrual health products, facilities and services. Poor menstrual health and hygiene adversely impacts people's reproductive and sexual health, psychosocial well-being, and their ability to participate in education, work and daily life. Progress towards gender equality will be hampered unless menstrual health and hygiene are addressed through policies, programming and funding.

The Global Menstrual Collective defines menstrual health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being in relation to the menstrual cycle. Menstrual health encompasses: 1) access to information and education; 2) access to products and facilities; 3) access to timely diagnosis and care for discomforts and disorders; 4) a respectful and positive social and physical environment; and 5) freedom to participate in all aspects or spheres of life without discrimination.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution [74/141](#) (18 December 2019) recognized that the lack of access to adequate water and sanitation services, including for menstrual hygiene management, especially in schools, workplaces, health centres and public facilities, negatively affects gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their enjoyment of human rights, including the right to education and the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In 2022, during the 50th Session of the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization emphasized menstrual health as a health and human rights issue and called for multi-sectoral, collaborative actions to ensure good menstrual health for all. In 2024, the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/RES/56/11](#)) reaffirmed the importance of menstrual hygiene management for the health, well-being and dignity of girls and women. This latest resolution underscored that States have the primary responsibility to ensure the full realization of all human rights, including those relating to menstrual hygiene.

While the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action did not call attention to menstrual health and hygiene, this aspect of health must now be included in global platforms and declarations championing girls and women's rights, gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights. Menstrual health and hygiene are intertwined with areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and their objectives, in particular women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, women and the economy, human rights, and the girl child.

Women's health

Menstrual health and hygiene and sexual and reproductive health are interconnected given shared biological underpinnings and socio-cultural and economic determinants across the life course.

Knowledge of the menstrual cycle is essential for sexual and reproductive health, to support women with family planning, contraceptive choice and use to avert unintended pregnancy and resulting poor health outcomes.

The hygienic management of periods and other forms of uterine bleeding may have implications for reproductive tract infections and reproductive health more broadly.

Menstrual discomfort and disorders affect physical and mental health, and reproductive and sexual health, and require health services for counselling, diagnosis and treatment of conditions such as dysmenorrhea, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and endometriosis.

Services for girls and women can be better leveraged to meet basic needs. For instance, menstrual health and hygiene interventions may serve as a more socially acceptable pathway to addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially among adolescents, people with gender diverse identities, and in contexts where these issues are socio-politically sensitive.

Further, access to sexual and reproductive health services may have benefits for menstrual health and hygiene, including access to menstrual health education, menstrual products, and treatment of menstrual disorders. Gender responsive water, sanitation and hygiene facilities can support people to meet their menstrual, and reproductive and sexual health related needs in privacy, safety and with dignity. In humanitarian settings and in the context of climate change, strengthening inclusive health services, and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities may support health and wellbeing in such challenging circumstances.

Girls' education

Educational institutions are important to reach adolescents and young people with menstrual health and hygiene and sexual and reproductive health interventions. Schools can model non-discriminatory environments and contribute to addressing unequal gender norms.

Schools with gender inclusive toilets and washing facilities, access to menstrual products, a place to rest, social supports, and adolescent focused health education and services can improve menstrual health and hygiene, and sexual and reproductive health among adolescents.

Responsive school environments that provide for menstrual health and hygiene may support girls to remain in school after attaining puberty. Female teachers trained in menstrual health and hygiene and/or adolescent health may inculcate healthy practices during this critical development phase. Lastly, menstrual health and hygiene education in schools can be an entry point for interventions on comprehensive sexuality education, life skills, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and early marriage.

Gender equality

Inequitable gender norms and associated stigma and discrimination can affect the health and wellbeing of people who menstruate, as well as their participation in school, work, social activities, and activities of daily life.

Bodily autonomy is important for gender equality. When schools, workplaces, communities, households, and public spaces have services and facilities that enable menstruation to be managed with dignity, safety, privacy and comfort, they may contribute to efforts to challenge discriminatory gender norms and reduce experiences of stigma and gender inequitable social and physical environments.

Engaging influencers and gatekeepers is important to enhance their understanding of menstruation, reduce stigma and discrimination, enhance their support, and bring about improvements in menstrual health and hygiene. A gender lens for menstrual health and hygiene may also be needed for those who face additional challenges resulting from their sexual orientation, disability, occupation, religion or social status, and in the context of climate change and humanitarian settings.

Against this background, members of the Global Menstrual Collective call on the global community of gender equality advocates, including governments, the donor community, civil society and development partners to recognize and uphold the rights of all people to realize their full potential, unhindered by inadequate support for their menstrual health and hygiene. To accelerate progress towards menstrual health and hygiene for all we call upon the Commission on the Status of Women 69 gathering to:

- Recognize that menstrual health and hygiene is important for the achievement of the strategic objectives outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as several Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8).
- Clearly include menstrual health and hygiene as a distinct action area in the Beijing + 30 processes, and in the post-Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

Simultaneously, we also call for:

- Increased investment in menstrual health and hygiene as a catalytic lever for change at the intersection between gender, social, economic and climate inequalities.
- The adoption of a comprehensive and gender responsive menstrual health and hygiene framework in policies, programming and investments related to gender equality, enabling prioritization of interventions that explicitly transform harmful, inequitable power structures, gender norms, roles, menstruation related stigma and discrimination.
- An integrated approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights that positions menstrual health and hygiene as essential to sexual and reproductive health, addressing menstrual health and hygiene across the life course.
- Expanded monitoring of key domains of menstrual health and hygiene and menstrual health impacts, while making the data grounded and accessible at the grassroots.

The Global Menstrual Collective represents +35 organizations working collaboratively for inclusive and universal menstrual health and hygiene. This statement is endorsed by members in consultative status with ECOSOC; Days for Girls International, International Planned Parenthood Federation, East and Southeast Asia and Oceania Region, PLAN International, Save the Children International, Simavi, WASH United, WaterAid and Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights.