



The Republic of Uganda

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

Press Statement

**On International Menstrual Health & Hygiene Management
Day**

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Minister of State for Primary Education

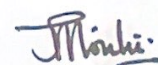
26th May 2022

Introduction

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, I welcome you all for this press conference. I thank all media houses and platforms that have walked with the Ministry of Education and Sports throughout the period of COVID-19 pandemic and continue to walk with us during this recovery period.

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of girls and women. It is a normal and healthy part of life for women and girls. Access to MHM services constitutes a significant fulfillment of the rights to sanitation, health and education of the girls and women.

Today, millions of women and girls around the world are stigmatized, excluded and discriminated against just simply because of menstruation. Yet this is a natural body function taking place in women and girls. Importantly, lack of information about menstruation leads to unhygienic and unhealthy menstrual practices and creates misconceptions and negative attitudes, which motivate, among others, stigma, bullying, and even gender-based violence.

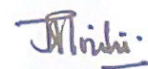
The logo of the Ministry of Education and Sports, featuring the word "Ministry" in a stylized, cursive font.

It's against this background that Uganda will join the global community to commemorate the International Menstrual Hygiene Management Day on Saturday 28th May, 2022. The theme for this year's celebration is **'Making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030'** The event will be commemorated at Iganga High School in Iganga District.

The Ministry of Education and Sports has been at the forefront of promoting menstrual health and hygiene in our schools and communities. Scientific studies have shown that poor menstrual hygiene management has negative implications to the achievement of education outcomes. It results into absenteeism, poor performance, and low self-esteem hence being one of the drivers of teenage pregnancies.

Rationale for the celebration

Ministry of Education and Sports is informing the public about the milestones registered so far. We are raising awareness about the challenges regarding access to menstrual education, materials and period friendly sanitation facilities.

Mishi

Ministry of Education and Sports is raising awareness on cultural taboos and how to end the stigma surrounding menstruation.

The occasion is to share the recommendations of the situational analysis study on menstrual health and hygiene management in Uganda (2020) and provide status of implementation of the recommendations

Achievements

The Ministry of Education and Sports together with Partners, have put in place a number of strategic measures to guide planning for Menstrual Hygiene Management these include:

1. The Ministry of Education and Sports distributed guidelines on management of menstruation in schools and Institutions in Uganda.
2. We have strengthened the capacity of education stakeholders to support menstrual health programs in schools and learning institutions
3. The Ministry of Education and Sports developed information and communication materials on menstrual health and hygiene targeting teachers, learners and parents.

4. The Ministry of Education and Sports developed message booklets for adolescents in learning institutions on their sexual and reproductive health.
5. We are developing a National Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Strategic Plan to address the gaps in MHM programming in the country.

Call for action

1. This is a multi-sectorial approach that requires **integrated action**, as Ministry of Education & Sports, we commit to work with Ministries of Health, Gender, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sectors.
2. MoES will advocate for programming in MHM at all levels in the country i.e. Schools, communities, local governments, parliament and MDAs among others.
3. Appeal to cultural leaders to influence a shift in attitudes and perceptions around menstruation.
4. Male folk (young boys and men) to participate actively towards supporting women and girls of menstrual age.
5. Media houses to use their powerful tools in delivering key messages to the public on the importance of menstruation.

6. Community to sensitize girls and strengthen the critical role of the parents especially the mothers.
7. Public - Private partnership needs coordination and further strengthening.

Challenges

1. Inadequate or absence of sanitation facilities in some schools prevent girls from attending school, particularly during menstruation.
2. Inadequate or absence of waste disposal facility in learning institutions is an impediment to effective menstrual management.
3. Still there are many social, cultural, and religious restrictions which are a big barrier in the path of menstrual hygiene management.

Conclusion

To effectively manage menstruation, girls and women require access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, affordable and appropriate menstrual hygiene materials, information on good practices, and a supportive environment where they can manage menstruation without embarrassment or stigma.

It's therefore unacceptable to prevent girls from getting education due to stigma of menstruation.

It's equally unacceptable to prevent women from earning an income and equally participate in everyday life due to stigma of menstruation

I thank you and God bless you all

For God & my Country

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Moriku".

Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu
Minister of State for Primary Education