



71th World Health Assembly Agenda item 12.3

The International Alliance of Women, IAW, has a strong focus on women's health rights, particularly Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights.

IAW commend WHO for including health education for adolescent girls and boys in the Global Strategy 2016 – 2030. We advocate for age-appropriate information about the biological sexual changes of both girls and boys in puberty. With a focus on preparing the girls for their first period, thus enhancing their self-confidence.

According to UNICEF¹ and UNESCO² about one in 10 girls in Africa, Asia and South-America skip school during menstruation or even drop out because of the lack of a healthful school environment, which is availability of sanitary pads or proper toilets. Menstruation is one of the strongest taboo intertwined with myths. These findings are also confirmed by the recent WHO study on Reproductive Health³. Also, due to lacking financial means schools are forced to reduce their general health-programs. This badly affects and discriminates girls.

The new IAW project "Water and Pads for school-girls" is helping our member organizations in African and Asian regions in tackling this urgent problem in their respective countries. Keeping the girls in school during their menstruation is achieved by addressing all barriers particularly creating awareness about taboos, providing information about misconception at school and in the families. Thanks to the provision of reusable pads and the availability of proper toilets girls feel secured. Both girls and boys have increased awareness of their full sexual and reproductive health rights because of an unbiased and responsible health-education.

We appeal to all governments to endorse all efforts to provide a good menstrual health management for all girls worldwide, thus enabling them to attend school without discrimination.

As an international women's rights organization we stand ready to monitor the progress of health education with other likeminded partners from civil society.

Thank you for your attention.

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1 UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/MHM_vConf_2014.pdf

2 UNESCO <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002267/226792e.pdf>

3 WHO / BMC <https://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-017-0293-6>

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