

PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Monday, October 11, 2021

A Call to #StopTheSanitaryPadsTax to Improve Menstrual Hygiene and Quality of Life for All Girls in Ghana

As the world commemorates the International Day of the Girl, we, member organisations of the Coalition of CSOs against Sanitary Pads Taxation do with one voice call on the Ministry of Finance to end the longstanding taxes on sanitary pads against adolescent girls and women in Ghana.

The Government of Ghana presently charges a luxury tax of 20% and an additional 12.5% VAT on sanitary pads. The fact that this tax is directly targeted at females for a natural occurrence in their reproductive process they have no choice or control over makes the tax highly unjust and immoral. The choice of whether to keep clean and safe or not is one that a state should never have to present to its people, particularly to the vulnerable sections of society.

The taxes on sanitary pads have made the product very expensive and inaccessible to many low-income households who must choose between the pads and competing needs. According to UNESCO, most girls are absent from school for four (4) days in a month and end up losing 13 learning days equivalent in every school term. In an academic year of nine months, a girl loses 39 learning days equivalent to six weeks of learning time due to the lack of sanitary pads. This situation has dire consequences for life outcomes for girls. This is why we are passionate about this issue – because any policy that discriminately pushes a section of its population into poverty has no place in an inclusive and democratic state.

Fortunately, though action is yet to be taken, successive governments have recognized the harmful nature and effect of this policy on the health and dignity of females. His Excellency, The Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia stated last year that the government

“will eliminate import duties on sanitary pads to improve health conditions, particularly for girls. It is very important. What we intend doing is to make sure we produce sanitary pads in Ghana until that happens in their numbers, we are going to eliminate import duties to bring down their cost,” – Citi News, 22nd August 2020

We call on the Vice President to again add his voice to urge the Finance Ministry to remedy this injustice in the forthcoming 2022 budget expected to be presented to Parliament in November 2021.

Ghana can and should follow the example of Kenya which cancelled taxes on sanitary pads as far back as 2004 and which has since been budgeting about 3M USD per year to distribute free sanitary pads in low-income communities. Since then, Rwanda and South Africa have also cancelled sanitary pads taxes. On the occasion of the 2021 International Day of the Girl, we call on the Ministry of Finance to #StopTheSanitaryPadsTax.

Thank you.

Signed:

Coalition of CSOs against Sanitary Pads Taxation

Members

1. Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC)
2. Revenue Mobilisation Africa (RMA)
3. Africa Education Watch
4. Renel Ghana
5. Muslim Family Counselling Services
6. Sung Foundation
7. Greater Accra Youth Network
8. Alliance of Feminine CSOs
9. Girls Not Bride Ghana
10. Global Media Foundation
11. Africa Civil Society Alliance on Child Rights
12. Center for Youth Analysis
13. Ghana Education Forum
14. Ghana TVET Coalition

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