



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY



Motion for a Resolution urging the EAC Partner States to facilitate girls with sanitary pads and hygienic facilities in schools

Pursuant to provisions of Article 92 of the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community, Partner States undertook to cooperate in the field of health and Considering that the Platform for Action developed at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women reaffirmed that all human rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social), including the right to development are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and further expressed in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights.

Re-affirming that the human rights of women and girl children are inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights, the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls is a priority for Governments and the United Nations and is essential for the advancement of women;

Considering both the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantee children's rights and uphold the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of gender;

Aware that various conventions and linked action plans elaborate on women's sexual and reproductive rights but do not explicitly talk about menstruation as one of the most stigmatized, and socially constructed silent curses that affect a third of the world's population throughout the developed and developing world;

Knowing that menstruation is the natural monthly occurrence of genital bleeding in healthy girls anytime between the ages of 8 and 16 until the period of pre-menopausal adult women;

Further knowing that while poor menstrual hygiene in developing countries and particularly in the East African Community has been an insufficiently acknowledged issue and that poor girls often have no access to sanitary products and as a result, due to fear of embarrassment, attend school irregularly, perform poorly, and in some cases drop out of schools;

Acknowledging that in different studies conducted in EAC countries, girls were found to be distressed or uncomfortable because of using poor protective materials during menstruation and this distracted them from full participation in class and also afraid of being teased by both boys and girls in case of an accidental leak, or fearing some negative attitudes, myths and/or taboos about menstruation;

Further acknowledging that menstrual pains, big flows of menses and lack of washing facilities and privacy in school's toilets are the main causes of girls' absenteeism;

Noting that school participation of girls, in particular in the region, lags far behind compared to boys in the higher forms of primary and secondary school, absenteeism leading to poor academic performance and subsequent dropping

out of school, resulting into persistence of gender disparities despite deliberate governments efforts to ensure equal rights to all;

Further noting that the low educational status of women result into limited knowledge, skills and technology to compete equally with men for available opportunities in all sectors;

Acknowledging that menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of women and girls and an important part of the basic hygiene, sanitation and reproductive health services to which every woman and girl has a right;

Further acknowledging that many girls and women in EAC countries are still using dirty and old pieces of clothes and toilet papers among others to contain menstrual flows, exposing them to health hazards, yet reducing the cost on sanitary pads would increase the number of users, thus improving health conditions;

Therefore EALA resolves to urge the EAC Partner States to:

1. Improve access, quality and affordability of sanitary pads in the East African Community by abolishing taxes on sanitary pads and promoting local production of low cost sanitary pads;
2. Follow examples of the Member States of the Republic of Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania that have abolished taxes on sanitary pads;
3. Sensitize people of EAC on normality of menstruation and dismiss taboos and fears amongst the youth;
4. Ensure availability of clean toilets and washrooms to girls in all schools;
5. Avail sanitary pads and painkillers in all schools and distribute them to girls whenever needed;

6. Immediate registration should be required including persons who
arrive here for primary, primary to secondary school

Wanted by Hon. Dr. Victor Ojiambo