



Menstrual Hygiene Day 2023

"Making Menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030"



#MHD2023

WWIL Champion on Child Protection
Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso

World Vision International Lesotho Menstrual Hygiene Day Celebration

Remarks by: Mr. James Nkamba Chifwelu | National Director

Today, on this auspicious occasion of joining the rest of the world in recognition of Menstrual Hygiene Day that was observed on the 28th May 2023, we gather here to commemorate and celebrate the progress we have made in promoting menstrual hygiene and raising awareness about this crucial issue.

At World Vision we believe all women and girls have the right to menstruate with confidence, with dignity and with support. Our programmes address all aspects of menstrual health and hygiene including policy and advocacy, timely and accurate knowledge about menstruation, social norms around menstruation, access to safe and affordable menstrual hygiene materials, and access to sanitation and washing facilities.

I stand before you today on behalf of World Vision International Lesotho, representing a united front that includes our esteemed government, development partners, private organizations, the community, schools and children. Together, we have embarked on a journey of empowerment, education, and advocacy, ensuring that menstruation is no longer a source of shame or stigma but a catalyst for positive change.

First and foremost, I would like to express our gratitude to Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, our child protection champion, who has been steadfast in her unwavering support and advocacy efforts in the promotion of the rights of children especially the girl child and raising her voice on behalf of Basotho children in ensuring women and girls live in an environment that values and supports their ability to manage their menstruation with dignity.

In addition to Her Majesty the Queen support, we thank the government of Lesotho for its unwavering support and dedication to this cause. In partnership with the Government of Lesotho, WWIL continues to provide access to clean water, dignified sanitation to learners in schools across 7 districts in 11 Area Programmes where World Vision works. Through our WASH programme we have:

- drilling of new boreholes, establishing grid and solar powered piped water projects, and the rehabilitation of non-functional water source for girls to have access to water during their menses.
- setting up menstrual hygiene and gender segregated friendly latrines in schools including those of people with disabilities. This year we have already supported 6 school with access to safe drinking water supply, reaching 2770 children in schools. We are also constructing latrines in 17 schools that will benefit over 7000 learners.

We appreciate the government's commitment that has been instrumental in creating an enabling environment for menstrual hygiene management through policy initiatives and legal frameworks, underway which will be playing a crucial role in the quest to ensuring access to safe and affordable menstrual products, promoting menstrual health education in schools, and providing essential infrastructure in schools.



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In addition to the government's support, we are immensely grateful for the invaluable contributions of our esteemed development partners such as UNICEF Lesotho. Their partnership has been instrumental in expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and fostering innovation. SDG 6.2 acknowledges the right to menstrual health and hygiene, with the explicit aim to, "By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations". Through development partners funding, and programmatic support, we have been able to implement comprehensive menstrual hygiene programs, engage communities, and empower women and girls with the knowledge and resources they need to manage their menstrual health with dignity towards the achievement of SDG 6: "Cleans Water and Sanitation.

I would like to also take this opportunity to also acknowledge the crucial role played by our private sector partners such as Vodacom Lesotho Foundation. Their involvement and investment in menstrual hygiene initiatives have been game-changers. By leveraging their resources and expertise, they have helped bridge gaps in accessibility and affordability, driving innovation in product design and manufacturing, and spearheading campaigns that challenge societal norms and break down taboos surrounding menstruation.

WVIL has developed an MOU with Vodacom Foundation this year towards strengthening our partnerships; and through this collaboration we were able to reach 476 girls with sanitary packages and addition to the 8000 children reached by WVIL through WASH program in the past 3 years.

Our partnerships with communities have been the cornerstone of our efforts. We have collaborated closely with community leaders, teachers, and Citizen Voice & Action (CVA) representatives to raise awareness, break down barriers, and address the unique challenges faced by different communities. By engaging community members as champions and change agents, we have fostered a sense of ownership and empowerment, ensuring that menstrual hygiene is embraced as a collective responsibility.

Schools have been pivotal in our journey towards menstrual hygiene empowerment. Through partnerships with educational institutions, we have integrated menstrual health education into curricula, fostering a supportive environment for young girls to learn, grow, and thrive. Our joint efforts have resulted in the establishment of safe and private spaces within schools, provision of adequate sanitation facilities, and the promotion of healthy menstrual practices. By empowering girls with knowledge, we are equipping them with the tools they need to manage their menstrual health and stay in school, thus unlocking their full potential.

The involvement of children has been particularly inspiring. We have seen young boys and girls stepping up as change agents, challenging societal norms, and advocating for menstrual hygiene rights. By engaging children through interactive workshops, peer-to-peer education, and awareness campaigns, we are sowing the seeds of a future where menstrual hygiene is no longer a taboo, but a topic of open conversation and understanding. These young advocates are paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society, where the needs and experiences of women and girls are acknowledged and respected.

Menstrual hygiene is not just a women's issue; it is a matter that concerns society as a whole. It is a reflection of our commitment to gender equality, human rights, and overall well-being. Today, we take a moment to reflect on the progress we have made through collaborative efforts, and to reaffirm our commitment to advancing menstrual hygiene in our nation.



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The partnerships we have cultivated have been instrumental in shaping our progress. They have brought diverse perspectives, local knowledge, and a shared commitment to the cause. We have witnessed the transformative power of collaboration, as we break down barriers, challenge deep-rooted taboos, and champion menstrual hygiene as a human right.

As we move forward, we must continue to strengthen these partnerships. We need to further engage communities, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their needs are met. We must work hand in hand with schools, supporting them in creating an environment that promotes menstrual health and education. And most importantly, we must continue to empower children, providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to become advocates for change in their communities.

We must continue to build upon our achievements and address the remaining challenges. We need to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable communities, ensuring that no one is left behind. We must advocate for the inclusion of menstrual hygiene management in public health policies, so that it receives the attention and resources it deserves. We need to sustain the momentum and strengthen our partnerships, harnessing the collective power of all stakeholders involved.

On this Menstrual Hygiene Day, let us recommit ourselves to the cause. Let us seize the opportunity to amplify our voices, to inspire action, and to transform the lives of millions of women and girls. By working together, we can create a society where menstruation is celebrated, where no one is held back by shame or stigma, and where every woman and girl can fully realize her potential.

Thank you all for your dedication, commitment, and unwavering support. Together, let us continue to break barriers, challenge taboos, and ensure a world where menstrual hygiene is a priority for all in pursuit of our committed to 'making periods a normal fact of life for all people who menstruate by 2030'

**Ke ea Leboha
Khotso.Pula.Nala**