

# Ghana commemorates World Menstrual Hygiene Day ...Second Lady calls for collective support for girls

BY TIMES REPORTERS

**S**TATE agencies, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations, yesterday gathered at various venues across the country to commemorate this year's World Menstrual Hygiene Day.

The day, which is commemorated on May 28, every year is an annual awareness creation drive and advocacy that highlights the importance of good menstrual hygiene and management at a global level.

This year's commemoration is on the theme "Together for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld."

**ANITA NYARKO-YYIREN-KYI** reports from the Odorgonno Senior High School in Accra, where the national commemoration was held, that the Second Lady, Samira Bawumia donated 5,000 packets of sanitary pads to be distributed to girls in schools within the Ga Central Municipal Assembly.

She underscored the need for a collective action towards menstrual health and called for accurate information and ensuring access to affordable and sustainable menstrual products.

She said period poverty had negative impacts including missing school days; increased health risks such as urinary tract infections, a cause of cervical cancer; and social exclusion ultimately diminishing

economic opportunities.

She expressed worry over stigma and discrimination women faced in some parts of the world, where they were seen as unclean, thereby restricting their movement and access to spaces and food.

"It is therefore imperative that we address these issues. Improving menstrual health and hygiene requires collaborative efforts across the education, health, water, and sanitation sectors," she added.

The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ms Darkoa Newman, stressed the need for stakeholders to intensify education on menstrual health.

She assured of the Ministry's commitment in engaging with parents on their adolescent children in improving menstrual healthcare.

The Deputy Country Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dr Emmily Naphambo, said the difficulty in affording menstrual products could cause girls to stay home instead of going to school and work, with lasting consequences on their education and economic opportunities.

**KINGSLEY ASARE** reports that the Ghana Chamber of Mines in collaboration with the Ladies Lead Foundation as part of the World Menstrual Hygiene Day donated 2,500 pieces of sanitary pads to be distributed to about 460 students of the Anumle Cluster of Schools in the Okaikoi North



• Mrs Samira Bawumia (left) presenting a sanitary pad to one of the students of Odorgonno SHS  
Photo: Ebo Gorman

Municipality in Accra.

The donation was under the Purple Peach Programme of the GCM which aims to provide sanitary products to young girls to keep proper hygiene during menstruation and also keep them in school.

The Chief Executive Officer of the GCM, Dr Sulemanu Koney, in remarks made on his behalf by the Human Resource and Operations Manager, Lawrence Boahemaa Awuah, said menstrual hygiene was important as it promoted the wellbeing and health of the female-child and as well as the socio-economic development of the country.

Dr Koney said the GCM would continue to support initiatives that promoted the menstrual hygiene.

The Director of Ladies Lead Foundation, Mrs Naomi Su-suawu, said the distribution of the sanitary pads started seven years ago during which students at the Korle Gonno Basic School had benefited.

She commended the GCM for funding the procurement of the pads and the Okaikoi North Municipal Education Directorate for partnering the two organisations to distribute the same.

The Okaikoi North Municipal Director of Education, Mrs Cynthia Aboni, said "We are all

products of menstruation and it is not a taboo and there should be no stigma attached to it."

**KINGSLEY E.HOPE** reports from Kumasi that the Greater Accra and Greater Kumasi Metropolitan Assemblies (GAMA/GKMA) Sanitation and Water Project of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources were setting up a Pad Bank to support girls whose parents are unable to provide them with menstrual pads during their menstruation.

At the celebration held at the Garden City Special School in the Asokore Mampong Municipality in the Ashanti Region on Monday, the Project Coordinator, George Asiedu, said philanthropists and institutions would be expected to voluntarily donate pads to support vulnerable girls.

He said in two years, the project had facilitated the production and distribution of menstrual awareness materials for girls including those who were visually impaired.

Mr Asiedu said the project was designed for the vulnerable in society, and the sanitation, water, hygiene, and capacity building components were mostly designed for people living in low-income communities and households.

He said for the past seven years, the project, being funded by the World Bank, has provided 598 modern toilets in schools in the two regions.



• Ms Awuah (third from right) presenting a sanitary pad to Mrs Aboni while other dignitaries look on