Global relevance and cross-cutting mandate of the Joint Programme

The release of research findings from Senegal and Cameroon provided a platform to voice women’s needs and call for action on menstruation at a meeting of global decision-makers in New York. The specific needs of young girls were also voiced to decision-makers at a regional education conference in Kigali. Such examples illustrate how the Joint Programme is making a difference on issues such as gender, equality, universal access and service delivery, all essential elements in the emerging global development agenda.

Decision-makers urged to break menstruation taboo

Research showcased at 59th Commission on the Status of Women in New York

Findings of the Joint Programme’s research on menstrual hygiene management in Cameroon and Senegal sparked great interest at a special side event during the 59th Commission on the Status of Women, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Friday, 13 March 2015. Hosted by the Permanent Missions of Senegal and Singapore to the United Nations, the session enabled UN Women and WSSCC to highlight the results and key policy recommendations to political and WASH decision-makers in this neglected area of women’s health.

The report of the event may be found on the WSSCC website.

Women and girls often choose to limit their cultural, educational, social and economic activities while menstruating, missing school, work and play.

Dr. Chris Williams, Executive Director of WSSCC, speaking at the Commission on the Status of Women side event

Photo: UN Women
Policy recommendations highlighted at the Commission on the Status of Women event

1. WASH services have meaning if they prioritize girls’ and women’s needs during the design, use and maintenance of facilities. This is equally important in the monitoring and evaluation of WASH programmes.

2. Policies, guidelines and budgets must integrate the practical needs of girls and women. This includes ensuring their full participation in decision-making processes particularly during adoption and implementation of policy instruments.

3. WASH services in public institutions must respond to the needs of all: women, men, children, disabled and pregnant women throughout their lives.

Senegal’s Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mansour Faye, highlighted the new policies his government aims to adopt to give women greater access to sanitation at home and in public spaces such as schools, and to manage waste, while also calling for more information and communications to be part of the strategy to encourage behaviour change.

For more information on the Senegal and Cameroon Studies, see the WSSCC website.

A key finding of the studies was the extent to which sociocultural taboos surrounding menstruation, combined with inadequate sanitation facilities, hold back girls’ progress in school, impede women throughout their working lives and have a detrimental impact on their overall health and personal welfare. Addressing sanitation and hygiene therefore offers a strategic entry point to improving women’s standing in society and their effective participation at school, at work and in cultural activities.

"Nothing is provided for girl students. And if they have their period when they are at home, they stay home for four or five days and don’t go to school. But how do you make up the time lost?"

Religious leader from the village of Dar Salam (Department of Salemata) – Kedougou Report

"It is hard to talk about women’s empowerment if day-to-day practical needs are ignored."

Archana Patkar, WSSCC, Commission on the Status of Women Side Event Panel Moderator
Joint programme and the evolving global development landscape

Post-2015: All eyes on the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set to succeed the MDGs agreed in 2000, will frame the global development agenda over the next 15 years. Already endorsed by the United Nations Secretary General in his synthesis report, The Road to Dignity By 2030, the Opening Working Group’s proposal is being reviewed and will be subject to negotiation by United Nations Member States. Seventeen goals and 169 targets are included in the proposal. The final outcome document from this negotiation will form the basis of an SDG Declaration, the SDGs would apply from January 2016, with an expected deadline of 2030.

Future action and progress in the area of gender, hygiene and sanitation will be framed by the SDGs and the new development agenda. Key differences compared with the MDGs include the universal nature of the goals, focus on service delivery as well as access, gender and equity and evidence-based monitoring (see box). Water, sanitation and hygiene for women and girls are addressed under goals 4, 5, and 6 and the related targets: 4, 5 and 6 (see table). To this we must add goals 8 and 10, equally important for the Joint Programme.

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<tr>
<th>Proposed SDG Goal</th>
<th>Proposed targets relevant to Joint Programme</th>
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| **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. | 4.5 By 2030, **eliminate gender disparities in education** and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.  
4.a **Build and upgrade education facilities** that are child, disability and gender sensitive and **provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments** for all. |
| **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. | 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. |
| **Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. | 6.2 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.  
6.b Support and strengthen the **participation of local communities** in improving water and sanitation management. |
| **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. | 8.5 By 2030 achieve full and productive employment and **decent work for all women and men**, including for **young people and persons with disabilities**, and equal pay for work of equal value  
8.8 protect labour rights and promote **safe and secure working environments** of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants and those in precarious employment. |
| **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries. | 10.2 By 2030 empower and **promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status**. |


**In Brief:**

SDGs vs MDGs – key differences in overall focus

1. **Universal** – high income as well as middle and low income countries; including poorest people in rural areas and fragile states.
2. **Service delivery as well as access** – in terms of safety, equity and affordability.
3. **Gender and equity** – considered a priority.
4. **Evidence-based** – informed and monitored through strong research and science.
Clean water and sanitation a top priority for citizens

In response to the United Nations My World global public survey, citizens of Cameroon, Niger and Senegal rated access to clean water and sanitation as one of the top three priority issues that matter most to individuals and their families, alongside education, healthcare and jobs.

http://data.myworld2015.org/

Next Steps:

1. AfricaSan, May 2015 – AfricaSan is the regional conference of African countries on sanitation. It will take place in Dakar (Senegal), from May 25-27th.

2. Training of trainers in Niger, June 2015 – The training will provide officers from relevant ministries in the region with critical information on menstrual hygiene management and planning in WASH for women and girls throughout their life cycle.

3. Review of the operational manuals of Pepam, June/July 2015 – Senegal Ministry of Sanitation’s Pepam is currently reviewing its operational manuals to include women and girls needs. The Joint Programme supports this process.

Join the MHM Community:

- Online community of practice in hygiene and sanitation Free and open to all. To join: www.wsscc.org/cop

- Online learning and MHM resource sharing platform For those who have taken part in training run by the Joint Programme in Africa and Asia. If you have not attended our training courses but are an MHM trainer and/or you would like to share information with members of the platform, please contact rockaya.aidara@wsscc.org

Contact:

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To sign up to our quarterly newsletter, share news or respond contact Rockaya Aidara at rockaya.aidara@wsscc.org