PRESS RELEASE

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The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Cameroon and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) present the results of a study on menstrual hygiene in Cameroon.

Yaoundé, 2 November, 2015. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Cameroon in partnership with the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) will officially launch the results of a study on menstrual hygiene in Cameroon on Tuesday November 3, 2015 in Yaounde.

The study titled “Menstrual Hygiene Management: Behavior and Practices in Kye-Ossi and Bamoungoum, Cameroon” is the third in a series by the WSSCC and UN Women under the joint Programme on Gender, Hygiene and Sanitation in West and Central Africa. It explores the subject of menstrual hygiene management by women and girls in Cameroon.

Key findings include:

- **A low level of knowledge on menstrual hygiene management in both the school and general sample**: Girls who were attending school at the time of the study, or who had previously attended school, said that they had received lessons on body changes and menstrual hygiene at school. However, they used the same practices for washing and disposal of sanitary material as those who had not been to school. This raises questions about the nature and relevance of information received within and outside the education system.

- **Poor Maintenance of school facilities and sporadic use by girls including during menstruation**: The majority of schools visited had latrines. But the poor maintenance rate of latrines (only 20% were clean in Kye-Ossi and 42% in Bamoungoum) results in sporadic use by girls, particularly during menstruation. At the same time, 22% of working women reduce their activities during menstruation. The absence of working public toilets is their main concern (33%) followed by (possible) stains on their
clothes, the lack of private space to change, and the physical discomfort associated with periods.

- **Lack of disposal solutions’ negative impact on livelihoods**: Sanitary protections are mostly disposed of in latrines or toilets – 85% in both the school and the general samples, posing a risk for the environment and for the maintenance of the latrines/toilets.

The study was conducted in 2014 in two regions with very different socio-cultural profiles: Kye-Ossi in the south and Bamoungoum in the west. It looks at the current state of menstrual hygiene management related practices and behavior and analyses infrastructure and public policies in the water hygiene and sanitation sector. The study also checks the availability and relevance of information on menstrual hygiene management, and evaluates its impacts on hygiene practices, people’s living conditions, their health, education levels and the employment of women and girls.

The ceremony to present the findings of the study will be attended by government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, WSSCC staff, and civil society organizations. It will also be an opportunity to begin advocacy in positioning menstrual hygiene in Cameroon’s national agenda. This includes the policy and strategic planning, as well as at community level, in order to better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UN Women and WSSCC are working together to implement the joint programme on Gender, Hygiene and Sanitation in West and Central Africa, which is aimed at changing policies and behaviors in the region to improve women and girls’ human right to water and sanitation.

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**Note to editors**

**About UN Women**

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate Progress on meeting their needs worldwide. For more information, visit [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org) or [www.unwomenwestandcentralafrica.com](http://www.unwomenwestandcentralafrica.com)

**About the Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council**

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is at the heart of a global movement to improve sanitation and hygiene for everyone. WSSCC is the only part of the United Nations devoted solely to the sanitation and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable people around the world. Through a collaborative approach which has spanned 25 years, WSSCC has harnessed the energy and expertise of communities, NGOs, governments, international organizations and the private sector. Together with thousands of members in 150 countries, the Geneva-based Secretariat advocates for change and facilitates local solutions for the millions of people who lack access to good sanitation and hygiene. For more information, visit [www.wsscc.org](http://www.wsscc.org)