



PRESS RELEASE

'During my period, I use rags or toilet paper but I am most comfortable when I don't go to school'. 17 year old girl Mirembe Annet in Kitwara primary school Kiryandongo District.

Poor menstrual hygiene management is among the greatest obstacles to girls' school attendance and retention affecting their performance. Yet the issue has not been given due attention. The topic is surrounded by taboos and myths, making a dignified and natural event something to be ashamed of.

Over the recent years, the World Bank and many Non-Governmental Organizations have conducted researches that show that up to 60% of the school going girls in Uganda miss school each month due to challenges ingrained in their menstrual cycle. Most girls often lack access to proper facilities such as sanitary pads, changing dresses, washrooms, water and soap to support them move through the menstrual cycle with minimal disruption to their studies

Globally the same concerns have been noted and Uganda has organized the first ever East Africa Menstrual Hygiene Conference under the theme: **Break the Silence on Menstrual Hygiene Management: Keep the girl in School.** The conference will take place on August 14 & 15, 2014 at Hotel Africana Kampala.

The Conference will bring together the voices of Civil Society Organizations, the Government, the Parliament of Uganda, the Private Sector Organizations, women and girls to advocate for Menstrual Hygiene Management to keep girls in school.

The conference has 4 objectives; a) to raise awareness on the impact of poor menstrual management, b) advocate for policy review c) develop strategies for operationalizing existing policy c) demonstrate sustainable good practices on menstrual management. The overall aim is to explore how best the **School Health Policy** can ensure girls get all the support they need to complete school and reach their full potential.

