



GZ-066-1094



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## PRESS STATEMENT

### GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR FREE SANITARY PADS WELCOMED, ENSURE PROPER IMPLEMENTATION TO GUARANTEE DIGNITY FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

**Accra, 12th March 2025**—The Ghana CSOs Platform on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) acknowledges the government's decision to allocate GHC 292.4 million in the 2025 budget for the provision of free sanitary pads to female students in primary and secondary schools. This is a commendable and a necessary step in tackling period poverty, reducing absenteeism among schoolgirls, and ensuring that no girl's education is compromised due to a lack of menstrual hygiene products.

While we celebrate this initiative and its positive impact on girls' attendance to school, their academic performance, decreases their risk of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, and sexual and gender-based violence, we also note that a significant group of girls are likely to be left out. Girls in apprenticeship and girls who are out-of-school. An efficient strategy to rope in these groups is necessary to ensure inclusion. Again, many schools lack proper toilets, water supply, and safe spaces for girls to manage their menstruation, further exacerbating absenteeism and discomfort. Establishing safe and hygienic facilities, equipped with disposal bins, running water, and private changing areas, is essential in fostering a supportive learning environment for menstruating girls.

We also note the significance of the tax waivers on locally manufactured sanitary pads in the 2024 and its potential contribution to accessibility, affordability and availability of sanitary pads in Ghana. Our market survey reveals that VAT is still charged sporadically and the prices are not competitive enough thus, young women and girls are yet to feel the full impact of this waiver.

As Ghana works towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth) and more importantly inching towards the 'Ghana we want' we make these recommendations for the government to consider:

- Establish a multi-year funding mechanism for maximum impact which includes a dedicated funding source, a detailed and transparent distribution strategy, an oversight implementation mechanism involving civil society organizations, gender activists, educators, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to ensure sustainability and inclusive, effective, and accountable system.
- Improved implementation and monitoring mechanism of tax waivers on locally produced sanitary pads. The Ministry of Finance and Ghana Revenue Authority to take immediate steps to ensure the effectiveness of the tax waivers on sanitary products, ensuring affordability and accessibility for all Ghanaian women and girls. This waiver will fully complement this initiative and even when the intervention does not reach girls in apprenticeship and out-of-school, they will benefit from the low market prices.



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- The government should collaborate with the local manufacturers to supply the products across the country. The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre must increase its effort in attracting sustainable foreign direct investments into this sector to promote competitiveness of the local industries.
- Additionally, the platform strongly recommends that the government prioritizes the provision of gender-sensitive water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities in basic schools to protect the privacy and dignity of girls.

We urge the government to act decisively to ensure that all girls, regardless of their economic background, can manage their menstruation with dignity and without barriers to education, health and other opportunities.

Signed

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#### **Note to Editor:**

The Ghana Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Platform on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established in October 2015 and institutionalised in 2016 to ensure more coordinated civil society efforts in achieving the SDGs in Ghana. It includes over 560 member organizations, consisting of coalitions, associations, unions, community-based organizations, local, national and international non-governmental organizations, and religious groups with members located across the regions and districts of Ghana.