

**Declaration and Call for Action for redefining the menstrual  
movement with dignity at the centre  
2<sup>nd</sup> International Workshop on Dignified Menstruation**



Dignified Menstruation

Menstrual blood enables the circle of human life. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “***All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.***” Simply by being human, all people deserve respect. Human rights naturally spring from that dignity. Across their life course, menstruators are discriminated against – and this stigmatization does not stop with menopause! This is a manifestation of a deeply unequal world order, determined by power inequalities and patriarchal value systems, denying us our basic freedoms manifested in deep rooted discrimination against menstruators in all their diversity.

**The dignified menstruation movement proposes a foundational agenda based on Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Social Justice underpinned by the voices, stories and pride of menstruators in all their diversity. It particularly embraces plurality, gender diversity and disability and commits to respect, listening and learning across the human life course.**

The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen, Nepal in association with the National Human Right Commission and Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation convened the 2nd International Workshop on Dignified Menstruation around the theme, of ‘Menstrual Talk, Dignity first’ from December 8-10, 2020. The discussions stayed away from sector silos – WASH, SRHR, Education, products and plumbing - to reclaim a space to listen to and learn from the voices of menstruators globally.

**We call on women, men and gender non-confirming individuals in all their diversity to collectively:**

- ❖ **Redefine the narrative** on menstruation, from charity to human rights, hygiene to dignity, impure to life giving, from five days to a life course approach.
- ❖ **Deny anyone the right to take away their fundamental right to human dignity** and thereby fully own and embrace the right to menstruate with dignity.
- ❖ **Delink dignity in menstruation from efforts that are more informed by colonial approaches, NGOise, own, direct or subvert the narratives and movements.** Every menstruator has the fundamental right to menstruate freely and with pride in their choices during periods or when they stop having them.
- ❖ **Stitch together different sector silos:** Menstruators do not live their life in sector silos of health, education, livelihoods or water and sanitation, hence the piecemeal approach doesn't help to fulfilling the full human rights for them.
- ❖ **Walk the talk of human dignity with and by men and boys:** Non-menstruators, throughout their lifecycle and identities, take responsibility to dismantle the root causes of stigma, discrimination and violence experienced by menstruators at the hands of individuals, institutions and ideologies.
- ❖ **Don't be shy- menstrual indignity is a manifestation of patriarchy. Refuse it and fight it!** To transform patriarchal unequal power dynamics and realities, we must recognize the diversity of women's intersecting realities, challenges, and needs, and pass on the baton of leadership especially to young women and girls, in all their diversity.
- ❖ **Tell the story far and wide to redefine research as we know it:** By listening to menstruator's experiences and voices we can expand and rightfully ground an increasingly monetized evidence base that is inaccessible to many.
- ❖ **Turn media stereotypes on their head:** counter the oft reported images of helpless, weak, abused menstruators by offering a broader perspective and moving the spotlight to the silent, unsensational, centuries-old abuse and violence.
- ❖ **Seek intergenerational investment to change hearts and minds as opposed to short term project funding** as an investment in human dignity itself.

- ❖ **Democratize information and stories in myriad languages** to build the movement, political will and the demand for ensuring dignity in menstruation.
- ❖ **Recognize and fight menstrual discrimination and indignity as symptomatic of a widely tolerated, silent pandemic** of gender-based violence and inequality that continues across the life course of women and girls and non-binary, gender diverse people denying them a full and free life.
- ❖ **Develop, where necessary, and implement, where present, progressive legislative and policy frameworks** at national, regional and international levels, to end stigma, discrimination and abuse of menstruators in all their diversities in all settings and spaces. Together allocate resources and funding to ensure the proper institutionalization of such frameworks, including in the global normative frameworks on human rights, gender equality and social justice.

