



Today May 28th on the international day of action for women's health, people all over the globe are advocating for the recognition of women's and girls' right to health in particular their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). SRHR is an essential part of universal health coverage, which is more than the absence of disease or dysfunction and ensures overall physical, emotional, mental, and social health and well-being. It encompasses human rights related to sexuality and reproduction, such as sexual health, sexual rights, reproductive health, and reproductive rights. Everyone, including women, girls, adolescents, and gender-expansive persons are entitled to enjoy their SRHR freely and without judgment.

#SRHRIsEssential



Today as we celebrate the international day of action for women's health in Africa our theme is centered around a call to action to #ResistAndPersist in guaranteeing that all not just some women's health matters and that SRHR is essential. In Africa, two-thirds of illnesses that women and girls in their diversities experience are caused by sexual and reproductive health problems. There is a huge unmet need for contraceptives, lack of access to comprehensive sexuality education, health budget cuts, lack to access to safe abortion services, high maternal mortality, and the response to the pandemic adversely affected access to SRHR services and information for all women, girls and gender-expansive persons.

#SRHRIsEssential



As we still continue to deal with the impact of the pandemic, and as countries roll out pandemic recovery plans, we must hold our governments accountable for the right to health for all African women, girls, and gender-expansive persons. The gendered impacts of the pandemic are still unaddressed to date, including loss of livelihood, increased unpaid care burdens on women and girls, heightened risks to gender-based violence, and barriers to accessing essential sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion and post-abortion care. We need to speak with one voice today and every day that women's health matters and SRHR is essential even during a pandemic.

So in response to the call to resist and persist, we asked our alumni to tell us why SRHR is essential and this is what they said.

[#SRHRIsEssential](#)



Leah Wanjiru ...

@Leah_Wanjie

Kenya

In today's society, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are pivotal for adolescent girls and women to freely express our bodily autonomy.

#SRHRIsEssential



Rebian Artis



@ArtisRebian

Kenya

There are no human Rights without sexual Reproductive rights

SRHR is an everybody issue and unless we look at it as a human right and not a woman's right, SRHR will remain a marginalized people issue.

Everyone deserves proper SRHR services for is a Human right.

#SRHRIsEssential



Joyce Njeri Muchoki

@njeri_hafsa

Kenya

The Government and other stakeholders including policy makers, have the responsibility to provide, protect and fulfil the rights of women's sexual and reproductive health. Sexual Reproductive health rights are human rights and therefore must not be held against any woman seeking the services.

#SRHRIsEssential



Mutinta Masowe ...

@MutintaMasowe

Zambia

SRHR is essential because it plays an important role in the lives of women's reproductive rights. It is also essential to achieving universal health coverage. Governments must prioritize the reproductive needs of women to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and make it possible in achieving gender equality.

[#SRHRIsEssential](#)



Lucy Kombe

@_itaeli

Kenya



"To me, "SRHR is essential" means universal access to safe and legal abortion, as well as other Sexual and Reproductive Health services. It also means governments' commitments and goodwill to advance a comprehensive, high-quality, and integrated approach to SRHR through efforts such as reviewing and repealing laws that criminalize voluntary abortion, and removing all legal and implementation barriers to ensuring access to safe, comprehensive, high-quality SRHR services. It means that a new narrative about women's health issues is needed, one written and articulated by women themselves, in all of their diversity."

[#SRHRIsEssential](#)



Loretta Owino Okeny

Uganda

SRHR are essential because they promote everyone's sexual and Reproductive rights moreso women's ability to make independent decisions about their bodies and are inevitable for achieving equality of the genders.



Annette Birungi ...

@ABirungii
Uganda

"Menstrual hygiene is essential because it is a normal and healthy part of every woman's life. If neglected, it can pose, serious reproductive health risks, particularly urinary tract infections"

Inadequate information and knowledge on menstrual hygiene and lack of access to affordable sanitary pads among girls in rural communities can be a serious problem as COVID-19"

#SRHRIsEssential



Luuba Namusoke...

@Liara202
Uganda

SRHR is essential also for women and girls in rural areas. They need access to family planning, PrEP, PEP, condoms, antenatal and post natal services, mother baby care centres to reduce unintended pregnancies, rampant spread of HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions, and SGBV.



Ntasuwizile Nalungwe

@NtasuwizileNalungwe

It has been long overdue!!!
Sexual Reproductive Health Rights should be inclusive,
accessible, equitable, and comprehensive to all.

We no longer want promises from our governments and as the alumni have said, African governments must act to prioritize women's health especially SRHR. So today we ask our governments to:

1. Prioritize health financing in line with the Abuja Declaration and SDG goal 3 target to enable access to affordable and quality Sexual and Reproductive Health information and services for African women, girls, and gender-expansive persons in their diversities.
2. We demand the passage and implementation of progressive and inclusive policy and legal frameworks such as the East Africa Community - Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill.