

Media Release

# **She** Decides. Day 2018

7 March 2018

National Department of Health/ Ministry for Development Cooperation, Denmark/  
*SheDecides* Support Unit

## **New scorecard to hold SADC leaders accountable for lack of progress in promoting rights of young women and adolescent girls**

- **Key outcome of *SheDecides* Day**

7 March 2018: South Africa's Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, a leading champion of the global [SheDecides](#) movement, has called on leaders in government, business, the not-for-profit sector and civil society across the world to help encourage health ministers in the SADC region to adopt the new *SheDecides* Scorecard at the next SADC Health Ministers meeting to be chaired by Namibia in November.

The *SheDecides* Scorecard was shaped by SA's Department of Health (DOH) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) together with the *SheDecides* Support Unit. It was announced by Deputy Director-General in the DOH Dr Yogan Pillay on behalf of the Health Minister, as the first-ever [SheDecides Day](#) came to an end in Pretoria last week. The new Scorecard tracks progress and holds governments accountable for actions to improve the rights and health of young women and adolescent girls in the SADC region.

*SheDecides* was established one-year ago by the (then) Dutch Minister Lilianne Ploumen in reaction to the [Global Gag Rule](#). It is focused on ensuring that the fundamental human rights of adolescent girls and women to decide for themselves about their bodies are respected, and that they have access to the information and services they need and are entitled to.

The flagship event in Pretoria was hosted by SA together with the Danish government. As well as the new *SheDecides* Scorecard, other key outcomes of the day included commitments by world leaders and the United Nations (UN) - through UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - to escalating the fundamental rights of young women and adolescent girls internationally.

The economic imperative of *SheDecides* was also underscored. Representatives of the governments of South Africa, Denmark, Canada, Finland and Tanzania agreed that unless the power of young women and adolescent girls was given back to them, global strategies to eradicate poverty and inequality such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals would be extremely difficult to achieve.

Robin Gorna, co-Lead of the global *SheDecides* Support Unit, says, “Huge support for the *SheDecides* flagship event in South Africa was received and our one-year old movement matured beautifully in just one day. Tangible commitments were made, giving *SheDecides* the integrity and credibility it needs to put our vision of a new normal for women and adolescent girls everywhere into action.”

As part of SA’s Department of Health’s conclusion to *SheDecides* Day, Dr Yogan Pillay also called for support against a Bill currently in parliament in SA that proposes amendments to the **1996 Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act**. Pillay said if passed, accessing termination of pregnancy services in South Africa will become far more difficult.

Around 250 people attended the South African event which included 100 young leaders from Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The rules, laws, policies and myths that block young women and adolescent girls from making decisions about their bodies, their lives and their futures were unpacked and challenged.

Meanwhile, other events took place in 219 cities and 44 countries across the world, each bringing national and international leaders, business and civil society together to find ways to create a new normal where adolescent girls and young women make decisions about their bodies, their lives and their futures - without question.

*SheDecides* is focused on three core actions:

- *Standing up and speaking out*
- *Changing the rules* including changing laws, policies and practices that stop adolescent girls and women from making their own decisions, and
- *Unlocking resources* to unleashing talent, technical, financial and human resources from public and private organisations, governments and foundations.

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Media contact: Alexandra van Essche [ave@worldonline.co.za](mailto:ave@worldonline.co.za) +27(0)82 321 1167