

MEDIA RELEASE  
*SheDecides* Support Unit

## **She** Decides. Day 2018

### **The world puts its weight behind the rights of young women and adolescent girls**

8 March 2018: Governments, not-for-profit organisations, community leaders, and business leaders in cities across the world have spent the past few days unpacking and challenging the rules, laws, policies and myths that block young women and adolescent girls from making decisions about their bodies, their lives and their futures.

They were marking the one-year anniversary of the global community movement, [SheDecides](#), which was established a year ago by the (then) Dutch Minister Lillianne Ploumen in reaction to the [Global Gag Rule](#).

“[SheDecides Day](#) was planned to mark the movement’s one-year anniversary, to deepen understanding about what *SheDecides* really means, and to expand support. We sought to mobilise all sectors of society everywhere to help create a new normal for young women and adolescent girls,” says Robin Gorna, co-Lead of the global *SheDecides* Support Unit.

Events to celebrate *SheDecides* Day were organised in Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Uganda, the UK and the US.

The flagship event for the first ever *SheDecides* Day was held in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted by *SheDecides* leading champion South Africa’s Minister of Health Dr Aaron Motsoaledi together with the Danish government, represented by *SheDecides* Champion Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tørnæs. In the days before and afterwards, events and activities to create awareness around the fundamental rights of adolescent girls and young women have taken place worldwide.

“The response was overwhelming and has given *SheDecides* integrity and credibility that will allow us to continue our work to ensure that the fundamental human rights of adolescent girls and women are respected, and, that they have access to the information and services they need and are entitled to,” says Gorna.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, committed to working with the influential role played by norms and stereotypes in communities and societies, which she said is far stronger than that of laws, and limits women’s power and choices. “This will include identifying, working with and supporting women’s groups and movements to instill the fundamental rights of young women and adolescent girls into the ethos of these organisations, and in turn, shape cultural change and positive role models.”

The power of social media was also underscored as *SheDecides* Day gathered momentum online to reach millions of people. The top five countries that supported the day on Twitter were Kenya, the

US, Uganda, the UK and India. The World's Simplest Test, a short but powerful Q&A video developed by *SheDecides* to highlight the basic principle of choice, had about 400,000 views across Twitter and Facebook in just two days.

In its first year, *SheDecides* received the backing of over 40,000 individuals, more than 50 governments, 220 organisations and 36 major champions – one third of them Ministers from across the world. Some \$450-million was raised. “We look forward to looking back on our achievements again on 1 March 2019,” says Gorna.

The current normal for too many young women and adolescent girls is that they are disproportionately affected by HIV, other STIs and unintended pregnancies. Being poor exacerbates these health issues, as does a lack of sexuality education and inadequate access to sexual reproductive health services. Intricately entrenched into this painful reality is gender-based violence. Today, millions of young women and adolescent girls are powerless to make decisions about their lives and their bodies.

*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.

ENDS

Visit: [www.shedecides.com](http://www.shedecides.com)

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**SheDecides global activities and events are listed below:**

## **AFRICA**

1. ***SheDecides* Flagship Event**  
Pretoria, South Africa
2. **Women's Rights in a Global Context: From Malibongwe to *SheDecides***  
Pretoria, South Africa
3. **Taking Stock - Effects of the Global Gag Rule in Kenya One Year On**  
Nairobi, Kenya
4. ***SheDecides*: Nairobi City Takeover**  
Nairobi, Kenya
5. ***SheDecides*: The Evening Lights**  
Nairobi, Kenya
6. **Star For Life**  
Ohangwena, Namibia
7. **Ladders Social Media Campaign**  
Nigeria
8. ***SheDecides* HangOut**  
Kampala, Uganda

## **EUROPE**

1. **YouAct: Repeal the 8th Campaign**  
Europe
2. **One Year On. Planning a future where *SheDecides***  
London, United Kingdom
3. **Livity presents *SheDecides* in Brixton**  
London, United Kingdom
4. **Wake Up For Women: Breakfast Reception**  
London, United Kingdom
5. **Access to Abortion: Documentary and Discussion**  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
6. **#SheDecides Rutgers Special: Baas in eigen buik**  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
7. **Share-Net Netherlands**  
Social Media Campaign
8. **SheDebates**  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands
9. **Lezing Lillianne Ploumen**  
The Netherlands
10. ***SheDecides* in Russia**  
Moscow, Russia
11. **Access to medicines and care for women: the good practices**  
Geneva, Switzerland
12. **WIN a year's supply of female condoms**  
Worldwide (lead by FC2 company in the Netherlands)

## ASIA

1. **Ministry of Women's Affairs Conference**  
Kabul, Afghanistan
2. ***SheDecides* India Launch**  
New Delhi, India
3. **#NoWomanUnheard**  
Mumbai, India
4. **Women Talk About Sex...Get Over It!**  
New Delhi, India
5. **Embrace: Music Justice Arts presents Voices in the Silence**  
New Delhi, India
6. **A day to stand up, speak out and say yes, *SheDecides***  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7. **Ideas plus dinner: Reducing risks of unsafe abortions in rural and desert resident women and girls**  
Mirpurkhas, Pakistan
8. **#YES4HER: A Youth Summit in Manila**  
Manila, the Philippines

## MIDDLE EAST

1. ***SheDecides* Day: Lebanese American University**  
Beirut, Lebanon
2. **Love Matters Arabic presents *SheDecides***  
Digital campaign

## AMERICAS

1. **Ella Decide**  
Mexico DF, Mexico
2. **One year anniversary of *SheDecides***  
Washington DC, United States
3. **#Fight4Her in Durham**  
Durham, New Hampshire, United States

## AUSTRALASIA AND PACIFIC

1. ***SheDecides* Art Exhibition and Live Music**  
Melbourne, Australia