



## Press Release

**Nairobi-Kenya: 11th September 2024:** Empowering 21st Century African Adolescents by making sexual and reproductive health information and education accessible.

In the run-up to commemorating 'Africa Human Rights Day 2024' (21 October), civil society organisations from across the continent have called on African governments to hold their end of the deal when it comes to sexual and reproductive health education for African adolescents. With a population exceeding 226 million in 2022, adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa represent the largest share of the global adolescent population, with [23% of them aged 10-19 years](#). This number is to double by 2050 and thus the need to educate and provide accurate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information is crucial now more than ever.

*'We need to ensure that we educate the adolescents so that they can take care of themselves'- Denis Bwana- SRHR Program Officer EANNASO. 'It will be unfair if we have information that can help them make better decisions and we do not share with them.'*

On the 21st of October 2024, the Solutions for Supporting Healthy Adolescents Rights and Protection (SHARP) project partners will publish a call to action targeting African countries who have not yet adopted and ratified the Maputo Protocol to hold their end of the deal and do so. The call to action will be open to all CSOs, the Private Sector, and individuals to sign on and push the advocacy efforts of making SRH education accessible to African Adolescents, particularly the girl child.

*'Health is a right and education is a human right too. Thus as NANHRI, we are mandated to ensure every African Child's right is protected'- Robert Athewa- SRH Lead- NANHRI*

In 2013, the Government of Zambia, through the Ministry of Education, developed the comprehensive sexuality Education (CSE) framework to enhance the provision of reproductive health and sexuality education that has been implemented since the existence of the education curriculum in 1964. The development of the school-based CSE framework now referred to as the Life Skills and Health Education (LSHE) has been integrated in various subjects in response to the Eastern and Southern African commitments of 2013 to better health outcomes for adolescents and young people. However, the Lack of information among young girls concerning sexual reproduction has contributed to high levels of early marriages hence the need for more advocacy.

Under the African Union (AU) theme for 2024 '*Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century*', the SHARP partners from the Great Lakes Region will be emphasizing two key articles of the '**PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA.**'

1. **Article XII:** Right to Education and Training: Under subsection 2c which reads: States Parties shall take specific positive action to:
  - c) Promote the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions and the organization of programmes for women who leave school prematurely.
2. **Article XIV:** Health and Reproductive Rights. Under subsection 2a which reads: States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to:
  - a) Provide adequate, affordable and accessible health services, including information, education and communication programmes for women especially those in rural areas.





The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa popularly referred to as the Maputo Protocol, was adopted in Maputo, Mozambique in 2003 and entered into force in 2005. It is described as *one of the most comprehensive and progressive instruments in the world for women's human rights*. The African Union is dedicated to advancing, upholding, and safeguarding women's rights to ensure that women and girls can fully exercise all their human rights.

We are calling out to African Governments to fully implement the Maputo Protocol and hold their end of the deal as we advocate for SRH education for adolescents in Africa.

*'African governments appended their signature on the Maputo Protocol, we just want them to deliver what they promised.'*- Celine Bankumuhari- Head External Relations and Advocacy- Faith to Action

Read the Call to Action Here [ENGLISH](#) | [FRENCH](#) and [sign on to join our advocacy](#) effort to ensure that African girls access accurate and timely SRH education and information.

### **About SHARP Project:**

The Solutions for Supporting Healthy Adolescents and Rights Protection (SHARP) programme unites various organizations, including experts in adolescent health, gender, SRH, and faith, who have a strong track record in research and advocacy for positive policy change. SHARP collaborates with policymakers, the private sector, faith leaders, influencers, and adolescents to enhance access to SRH services and commodities, aiming for lasting health and well-being improvements, especially for adolescent girls. Funded by the European Union, SHARP is a four-year initiative focused on improving adolescents' sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) and addressing unmet family planning needs. It operates in six countries in Africa's Great Lakes Region: Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia.

