

**Statement by Denmark at the 63rd CSW session
11 March 2019, New York, United Nations
By minister of equality Eva Kjær Hansen**

Madam Chair, ministers, participants,

[ministeren åbner taske med menstruationsremedier]

I will focus on one particular subject, which is seldom debated in international fora: Women's blood!

Based on the number of participants, I would guess that around 100 women in this room have their period right now.

And while bleeding is a natural part of being a woman – and indeed of human reproduction itself – blood continues to create barriers for women.

The documentary *Period. End Of Sentence* recently won an Oscar for its portrayal of the stigma attached to menstruation. It won despite one member of the Academy saying that, *"it's well done, but it's about women getting their period, and I don't think any man is voting for this film because it's just icky for men."*

Let me tell you something: Bleeding is perfectly natural, and there is nothing icky about it.

But there is something rotten about the way bleeding women are treated.

The stigma concerning women's blood has very real consequences;

- Some girls can't go to school when they bleed. Hygiene products are prized as luxury goods and young girls can't afford them. This effectively limits girls and women's opportunities in life.
- Some traditions stigmatize women when they have their period. Women are excluded from religious ceremonies because they are considered unclean.
- Some young women are stigmatized or worse if they **don't** bleed on their wedding night, even though it is established that bleeding cannot determine a woman's virginity.

All through history, women and girls have been discriminated, repressed and shamed because of their blood – preventing them from fully enjoying their human rights.

This has to end!

Our common task at this CSW is to contribute to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. I can assure you that Denmark is committed to progress towards gender equality.

Indeed, the other SGD's can only be reached if we all contribute – men and women alike.

In order to reach our common goals, women must be free to decide on matters concerning their own bodies.

I would very much like to see this clearly reflected in the outcome document we hope to adopt at the end of this session of the CSW.

Thank you.

Let me now pass the floor to my colleague from the Faroe Islands.