

## **LETTER: FORMAL RECOGNITION OF SEPTEMBER 4 AS WORLD SEXUAL HEALTH DAY**

To: All affiliated societies and members of WAS

Subject: Formal recognition letter of September 4 as World Sexual Health Day

Human rights are those principles that are universally considered as protectors of human dignity and promoters of justice, equality, freedom and life itself (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948).

The right to health is a fundamental right and, therefore, sexual health is also a fundamental right. Sexual Health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality and not only the absence of disease, dysfunction or disability (WHO, 2002). This means sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relations, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence (Declaration of Sexual Rights. World Association for Sexual Health, WAS, 2014).

To ensure the development of a healthy sexuality free of discomfort, risk, suffering, guilt and shame, sexual rights are human rights (WAS, 2008) that must be recognized, promoted, respected, protected and defended by all societies with all the means at their disposal. To this end, the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) as a multidisciplinary international organization that includes scientific societies, non-governmental organizations and professionals in the field of human sexuality, promotes sexual health throughout life and through world through the development, promotion and support of sexology and sexual rights for all people.

In 2010, WAS asked all its member organizations to celebrate World Sexual Health Day (WSHD) every 4th of September, in an effort to promote greater social awareness of sexual health throughout the world, encouraging open and respectful discussion about sexuality and promoting the right of people to express their sexuality in a healthy and responsible way. This initiative has had the support of WHO (e.g., [https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual\\_health/sexual-health-day/en/](https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/sexual_health/sexual-health-day/en/)). Since 2010 each year has featured a different slogan has been used in the search for the aforementioned objective.

The first World Sexual Health Day was celebrated with the motto "Let's talk about it!" To begin to break fears and taboos surrounding sexuality. The World Sexual Health Day 2011 focused on the sexual health of young people with the theme "Sexual health of young people: shared rights and responsibilities". The central theme of World Sexual Health Day 2012 was diversity and minorities, with the slogan "In a diverse world, sexual health for all". In 2013, a reminder was made of the fundamental importance that sexual rights play in integrating sexual health and the motto was "To achieve sexual health, choose your sexual rights and take your picture!

The motto in 2014 was "Sexual health: The well-being of sexuality". In 2015 it was "Justice is a fundamental human right to achieve sexual health". In 2016 it was "Sexual health: Let's break myths!". In 2017 the motto was "Bonding and intimacy. A possibility for all people. " In 2018 the theme was "Sexual health and sexual rights are fundamental for well-being" and in 2019 we have chosen "Sexuality education for all. A bridge to achieve sexual health".

World Sexual Health Day is a global celebration that works on a voluntary basis and to date we have reports from more than 40 countries participating in multiple initiatives,

which have been published on the official WAS Global Facebook page of World Sexual Health Day <https://www.facebook.com/4sept/> in English and <https://www.facebook.com/DMSS4sept/> in Spanish.

Country organizers have carried out activities in schools, the media, hospitals, libraries, universities, public squares, art halls, theater groups among other settings.

WAS would like to ensure that sexual health issues are widely discussed everywhere. For example, in the state of Jalisco (Mexico) it has become an official day in the state calendar and in the Argentinian province of El Chaco it was declared of legislative and provincial interest.

We believe that we need one more step, what it is like to ask for the formal recognition of September 4 by the governments of each country and by the United Nations Organization.

We ask you as a WAS member society that you are, to formally request the formal recognition of the date from the government of your country. To assist you we are providing below a template that you can adapt to your needs.

## TEMPLATE

“Dear XXX (Prime Minister/President/other)

Human rights are those principles that are universally considered as protectors of human dignity and promoters of justice, equality, freedom and life itself (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948).

The right to health is a fundamental right and, therefore, sexual health is also a fundamental right. Sexual Health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality and not only the absence of disease, dysfunction or disability (WHO, 2002). This means sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relations, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence (Declaration of Sexual Rights. World Association for Sexual Health, WAS, 2014).

To ensure the development of a healthy sexuality free of discomfort, risk, suffering, guilt and shame, sexual rights must be considered human rights (WAS, 2008) and must be recognized, promoted, respected, protected and defended by all societies with all the means at their disposal. To this end, the World Association for Sexual Health (WAS), as a multidisciplinary international organization that includes scientific societies, non-governmental organizations and professionals in the field of human sexuality, promotes sexual health throughout life and through world through the development, promotion and support of sexology and sexual rights for all people.

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In the state of Jalisco (Mexico) it has become an official day in the state calendar.

In the Argentinian province of El Chaco it was declared of legislative and provincial interest.

Through this means the XXXXXX (name of the organization) would like to request the formal recognition of the date in XXXX (Name of the country/state/province/city).

We hope our request receives a positive answer.

Sincerely,

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