

## **Remarks**

**By**

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**Launch of the Namibian Correctional Service (NCS)  
Health Policy**

**11 May 2016**

**Safari Hotel**

**Windhoek, Namibia**

Honourable Major-General Charles Namoloh, Minister of  
Safety and Security

Honourable Bernard Haufiku, Minister of Health and Social  
Services

Honourable Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender Equality and  
Child Welfare

Honourable Penda Ya Ndakolo, Minister of Defence

Honourable Albert Kawana, Minister of Justice

Honourable Daniel Kashikola, Deputy Minister for Safety and  
Security

Commissioner General Raphael Tuhafeni Hamunyela,  
Namibian Correctional Service

General, Sebastian Ndeitunga, Namibian Police Force  
Senior Government Officials

UN Heads of Agencies Present

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of the media

A very good morning to you all!

I am pleased to be here with you at the official launch of the Namibian Correctional Service Health Policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by commending the Ministry of Safety and Security for taking a leadership role, in the development and implementation of this evidence and human rights based Health Policy. A policy which responds to a challenge that is not often talked about.

This initiative is testimony that Namibia is committed, and paying attention to, health in correctional facilities.

HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Hepatitis A&B remain serious health concerns among people in correctional institutions. This presents significant challenges, not only to the management of these facilities, but also to public health authorities and the government at large.

Globally, the prevalence of HIV, TB and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), among populations housed in correctional facilities, tends to be higher than in the general population. (Usually 2 to 10 times higher)

Reducing disease transmission in correctional facilities is therefore important as after release, inmates, often re-integrate into society.

If we are to successfully tackle this challenge, frameworks that are embedded in the principle "Good prison health is good public health" are needed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Namibia, His Excellency the President has asked us all to wage war on poverty and implement the Harambee Prosperity Plan so we can lift thousands of women, men, girls and boys out of poverty and 'leave no one behind'.

And on the global agenda, the new Sustainable Development Goals have been launched.

The 17 goals, designed to guide global action over the next 15 years, have at their core: the eradication of poverty, saving the planet and bringing about prosperity for all.

SDG 3 is relevant to our discussion here today. Goal 3 aspires to promote good health and well-being for all; and to end epidemics of HIV/AIDS TB, Malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030.

Both agendas converge in recognizing that we can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last, to have a chance of saving the planet.

And in this regard, Namibia has good stories to tell. Over the past 15 years, Namibia has managed to reduce new HIV infections by 50%. The country is also on track when it comes to the elimination of mother to child transmission, and 84 % of HIV positive people are accessing ARVs.

Namibia's significant progress towards achieving an HIV free generation and must be applauded.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite this progress, challenges remain.

Over 13% of the people in Namibian correctional facilities are believed to be living with HIV.

Therefore if Namibia is to remain on track in terms of achieving its health goals, programs that target key populations, including people who use drugs and those incarcerated, are needed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The implementation of this Health Policy has implications for institutional and resource capacities. The Policy calls for the identification of structural barriers, such as legal frameworks, which could make it difficult to effectively implement.

We in the UN strongly believe that the Namibian Correctional Service (NCS) will continue to lead and tackle challenges, for the benefit of all. And we are ready to join hands, and do our part to ensure its success.

So, and in conclusion, let us all join this quest for a generation of disease free people in correctional facilities.

Let us:

1. Vaccinate people against hepatitis
2. Test and provide treatment to people who are HIV positive
3. Check for STDs and provide treatment
4. Promote and provide services for circumcision
5. Provide condom's through dispensers in toilets, and
6. Continue to provide TB treatment

The UN family in Namibia is committed. We are committed to joining forces with government, in heeding this call. A call

to empower those who are not only working, but also those incarcerated at correctional facilities.

The UN is committed to the continued development of Namibia and all its citizens so that no woman, man or child is left behind.

I thank you!