

Remarks by the UN Resident Co-ordinator, Ms. Kiki

Gbeho

On the occasion of

Private Sector Partnership Engagement Advocacy

Dinner

In commemoration of the Day of the African Child

14 June 2016, Strand Hotel, Swakopmund

Director of Ceremony,

- Hon. Minister Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
- Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of the Erongo Region
- Ms. Yvonne Chaka Chaka, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador
- Ms. Micaela Marques de Sousa, UNICEF Representative
- Dr Monir Islaam, WHO Country Representative
- Senior Government Officials here present
- Members of Civil Society
- Esteemed Partners from the corporate world
- Members of the media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great honour to deliver a few remarks at this Private Sector Partnership Engagement. This event is being hosted as

part of Namibia's week long commemorations of the Day of the African Child.

The relationship between the Government of Namibia, the UN Family and the public sector demonstrates how we are uniting our voices and our forces to accelerate the promotion and protection of children's rights in Namibia.

Tonight's occasion is about reflecting on this year's theme of the Day of the African Child - **Conflict and Crisis: Protecting All Children's Rights**; and agreeing as partners that economic, social, and environmental development are all prerequisites for the future we want for our children.

This year we strive to reinforce the unified commitment towards safeguarding good governance, democracy and human rights (especially those of children) in Namibia.

Since Independence we have witnessed enormous progress, thanks to Government's prioritisation to economic growth, poverty reduction and reduction in inequalities.

Strategies such as the recently launched Harambee Prosperity Plan give a clear testament of this commitment, as this is the latest blueprint to accelerate Namibia's socio and economic growth.

Namibia has also agreed and signed important international treaties such as the Human Rights Charter and the African Charter, which have been translated into binding laws, policies and programmes.

Namibia's strong political commitment to children, is visible through the Universal Child Welfare Grants system. This comprehensive and entirely government funded social grant system has helped shield thousands of children from vulnerabilities and allowed them access to the basic necessities required for a dignified life.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Namibia is not only on track, but ahead of some its regional peers, in terms of delivering services to all citizens.

In health, the total number of deaths in children under five, has steadily been brought down from 4,200 per year in 1990 to less than 3,000 in 2013. **(Footnote)**

Primary education enrolment currently stands at over 99 percent, while the secondary school enrolments are set to increase with the new provision of the Universal Secondary.

In addition, Namibia has made huge strides in combatting HIV and AIDS, remaining one of the leading countries in the elimination agenda of Prevention of Mother to Child

Transmission (PMTCT) and making ARV treatment more accessible. **(Statistic)**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These reductions in infant mortality, increases in school enrolment and provision of basic services for the protection of our children, have set the pace for Namibia's development.

Nonetheless, more work needs to be done if we are to close the remaining gaps and retain this level of progress.

You will recall that in September 2015, the world welcomed the new 2030 development agenda. Just last week, the UN Family joined the Government to launch of the Domestication of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Agenda 2063.

The SDG agenda at its core, calls for global action to eradicate poverty and save the planet.

Apart from the focus of tackling inequality, poverty and discrimination, providing education, health and achieving environmental sustainability, Goal 17 firmly calls for *strengthened means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development*. This is why we are here today.

Building on this spirit of the SDGs, we are therefore here to collectively discuss how to sustain and surpass the improvements made over the last 26 years in Namibia.

Ladies and gentlemen:

The scope and ambition of the new goals cannot be achieved by Government alone. There is need for a deliberate and well-co-ordinated relationship between the Government, UN Family, Civil Society and Private Sector players to end poverty, improve the sanitation, protect the environment, end gender based violence, reduce social exclusions, as they affect women, and children.

Allow me to highlight that the private sector, has bought into the 2030 Agenda, through adopting good eco-sensitive, people centred practices and commitments while realising economic growth opportunities.

However more can be done, the United Nations Family in Namibia, is convinced that every company has something to contribute to the development priorities, through their core business, or through their contributions to the development goals through advocacy efforts.

Honourable Minister Sioka:

We are therefore keen to see even greater engagement of the private sector in addressing pressing social and economic issues within our communities.

We can do this by supporting the private sector players in adapting strategies, partnerships and operations which are directed towards reducing risks, abuse, promoting better social and economic opportunities.

Our private sector, as the primary driver of economic growth, can promote sustainability and development in areas that used to be the exclusive domain of Government, ranging from health and education, to community investment and environmental stewardship.

The time to synergise the approach to development is now. The time to build a healthy workforce and consumer base, as well as a healthy environment for resources for production is also now!

I thank you