



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Remarks by the UNDP Resident Representative

Ms. Kiki Gbeho

Launching of the EIA guidelines Integrating HIV and Gender

19 May 2016

- Director of Ceremony
- Honourable Minister of Environment and Tourism Hon. Pohamba Shifeta
- Representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Services;
- Representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Representatives from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
- Representatives from Ministry of Works and Transport
- Representatives of the UN
- Environmental practitioners
- Ladies and gentlemen

UNDP is privileged to be part of this event where we are yet again reaching another milestone in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and Gender into policy and planning activities. In this case, into the mandate of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Namibia has been part of a regional pilot project to review environmental assessment processes, and to identify gap areas, where social issues can be integrated.

Ten countries, namely, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe participated in this initiative.

Through this pilot project, Namibia is once again the first:

Namibia is the first country in the sub-region to develop country specific guidelines for integrating HIV and Gender related issues into Environmental Impact Assessments for Capital Projects.

This is a great milestone for which Namibia must be applauded.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

His Excellency the President Dr. Hage Geingob has launched a war on poverty, elaborated the Harambee Prosperity Plan, and decreed that 2016 is the year of implementation. The new sustainable development agenda, with eradicating poverty and saving the planet at its core, has also been launched.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan stresses the importance of sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and places people at the centre of development.

Capital projects in Namibia remain crucial for economic growth and employment creation. Successful projects will reduce poverty and increase government revenues as well as social spending.

Capital projects therefore have the potential to contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

However, if not managed properly, capital projects can also have negative effects. These projects could fuel HIV transmission among project staff and their adjacent communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Namibia has made significant strides in reducing HIV new infections, especially among children. Rates have declined from 12,000 in 2010 to less than a 1,000 in 2016. Annual AIDS deaths have also reduced from 11,000 in 2010 to 8,700 in 2014¹.

We should capitalize on this progress by redoubling efforts to reach the target of zero new infections by 2030².

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Half of the Namibian population is female (51.5%)³. And unemployment among women, at 31.7%⁴ remains high.

¹ HIV Estimates and Projections 2015

² Fast Track Ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030

³ 2011 Census Report

⁴ Namibia Statistics Agency – Labour Force Survey

We cannot therefore talk about winning the war on poverty, getting to zero new infections and attaining gender equality, without talking about women and girls.

Mainstreaming HIV prevention programmes and Gender equality into Environmental Assessment processes can contribute to reducing the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS

UNDP therefore, remains committed to supporting the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, and Ministry of Health and Social Services in mainstreaming HIV prevention and gender equality into policies and programmes to ensure implementation.

With these few remarks, **Ladies and Gentlemen** I want to leave you with the following message:

There is an urgent need to raise awareness; to inform about the potential negative impact of HIV transmission and Gender inequality on communities, if urgent preventive action is not taken when Capital projects are being implemented.

I therefore urge us all to take action now!

I thank you.