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PRESS RELEASE

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UN System in Namibia launches “Prosperous Paths” outreach programme to empower & inspire 5000 girls

Wednesday, 29 July, 2016: Today, the United Nations (UN) System in Namibia launched “Prosperous Paths,” a unique educational outreach programme targeting young girls in Namibia. The objective of the programme is to reach out to young girls at secondary school level and educate them on gender equality, women’s empowerment as well as offer mentoring opportunities to enhance the status of the girl child in Namibia.

The launch of the programme took place at Jacob Marengo Tutorial College in Windhoek, where 600 young girls were addressed by the UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia, Kiki Gbeho. She encouraged the young girls to “take space, be prepared and dare to be different.” She called upon young girls to take their seat at the table, “now is the time to step it up!” The UNRC shared her personal journey as a women and called upon Namibian women to make their voices heard.

„In Namibia, unfortunately, 33% of all married women aged 15- 49 have experienced physical, sexual, and/ or emotional violence from their spouse and have also suffered one or more physical injuries. A total of 28 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men aged 15-49 justified beating as an acceptable way for a husband to discipline his wife (NDHS: 2013). Although there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, Namibia has made progress in gender equality and in eradicating GBV, “she noted.

On International Women’s Day this year, Ban Ki Moon called upon the global community to take action, „Let us devote solid funding, courageous advocacy and unbending political will to achieving gender equality around the world. There is no greater investment in our common future, “this programme is a first step in creating advocacy in Namibia and keeping the conversation going about women and young girls.

The launch event of “Prosperous Paths” will be the first in a series of similar interactions, where the senior executives of UN Agencies in Namibia will utilize the platform for public education. Their presentations will focus on leadership, vocations and ideas on closing the gender gap, in order to raise the profile of young women in Namibia to become leaders in any field of study, economic sector and institution. Some of the topics they will be covering include: gender justice, reproductive rights, girls and leadership, poverty, health, educational and career opportunities for women and girls.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by UN Member States in September 2015 is a universal roadmap for people and planet, addressing the key challenges of the 21st century, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Women’s empowerment is recognized as a pre-condition to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

As part of implementation efforts, UN Women adopted “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step it up for Gender Equality,” a campaign that asks governments to make national commitments to address the challenges that are holding women and girls back from reaching their full potential. Empowering women and girls is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDGs include a transformative stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s rights (Goal 5) that addresses structural barriers to women’s empowerment, along with important targets on gender equality in other Goals. Providing women and girls with equal access to health care, education, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. When women lead they not only lead businesses, they lead in their community, they fight for their children, and they give voice to issues that are important to our collective future.

A social media campaign in support of this programme will run for the duration of the programme to highlight the messages and promote the lessons learned to other girls. Students will be encouraged to tweet using #ProsperousPath to highlight where they want to go with their careers, the questions they have about leadership and challenges they face as women. This social media campaign will act as a digital mentorship programme in which the UN System will continue to interact with students after the presentation and provide guidance on their path of becoming future leaders.

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Contact:

Anthea R. Basson
National Information Officer
Department of Public Information
UNIC Windhoek – Namibia
Tel: +26461-2046408
E-mail: anthea.basson@unic.org