



**Remarks**

**By**

**Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho**

***UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident  
Representative***

***Opening of the Association of  
Diplomatic Spouses in Namibia, Gala Dinner***

**15 September 2017**

**Safari Court Hotel and Conference Centre  
Windhoek, Namibia**

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**The President of the Association of Diplomatic Spouses, Ms  
Ida Salleh;**

**Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and  
Representatives of Embassies and High Commissions in  
Namibia;**

**Colleagues from the United Nations Country Team;**

**Members of ADS;**

**Development Partners;**

**Members of the media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good evening!**

It is a pleasure to be here for this year's Association of Diplomatic Spouses in Namibia Gala Dinner; an event that allows us to celebrate the variety of culture and traditions of the diplomatic community in Namibia and their nationals. Thank you, ADS, for organizing this event.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This year's ADS theme, "children's welfare", is extremely relevant not only in Namibia, but also globally. With over

400 million children living in extreme poverty<sup>1</sup> and over 60 million primary school children out-of-school<sup>2</sup>, the need to care for, and educate children, is something that all countries must address.

Children's welfare must remain at the centre of the world's development agenda.

To focus our efforts, member states, including Namibia, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup>. And regionally, Namibia has also committed<sup>4</sup> to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child<sup>5</sup>.

In 2015, world leaders adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and pledged to leave no one behind.

Leaving no one behind, includes the 40% of Namibia's population<sup>6</sup>, that are below the age of 18.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. Press Release: Report Finds 400 Million Children Living in Extreme Poverty. October 2013. Accessed online: <http://bit.ly/1blqJh1> \*Figure is from 2010

<sup>2</sup> World Bank. Out-of-school children of primary school age, both sexes (number). Accessed online: <http://bit.ly/2vP39aN> \*Figure refers to data from 2014

<sup>3</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1990. Accessed online: <http://bit.ly/1fVlqsS>

<sup>4</sup> African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. 'Ratification Table: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child'. Accessed online: <http://bit.ly/2f1MJIR>

<sup>5</sup> The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Accessed online: <http://uni.cf/2xhh64K>

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF. "Namibia- Statistics". Accessed online: <http://uni.cf/2n8Q36B> \*Figure is from 2012, percentage of children (0-18 years) of the total population

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Namibia has good stories to tell when it comes to children and their welfare;

- In 2015, Namibia passed the Child Care and Protection Act<sup>7</sup>, “A comprehensive legislative framework [to address] the rights of children [not] yet fully realized in Namibia”.<sup>8</sup>
- The number of children benefitting from child grants, increased from roughly 4,000 in 2001 to 220,000 in 2016.<sup>9</sup>
- And in 2014, over 90% of Namibian children were enrolled in primary school.<sup>10</sup>

## **However, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

There is still work to be done:

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<sup>7</sup> Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia. WINDHOEK - 29 May 2015. Accessed online: <http://bit.ly/2xW7klD>

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF. Press release: Passing of child care and protection bill, is a major milestone for the country, UNICEF says. March 2015. Accessed online: <http://uni.cf/2xfVSUI>

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF. *Children and the Namibian Budget: Social Assistance and Welfare*. 2016/2017.

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF. *State of the World's Children 2016*. June 2016. Page 1. Accessed online: <http://uni.cf/2fXHGFQ>

- According to the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA), nearly one in five [18%] children live in severe poverty.<sup>11</sup>
- One third [33%] of all girls, aged 15-19, have experienced physical or sexual violence<sup>12</sup>
- And 34% of senior secondary school children are not in school, and 65% of those in school are at risk of dropping out.<sup>13</sup>

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In Namibia, the well-being of children, is addressed through the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5)<sup>14</sup> and the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP)<sup>15</sup>.

And we have all been challenged, by the SDGs, (Goal 17), and the Government (War on Poverty), to 'Harambee' in order that no one feels left out; least of all our children.

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<sup>11</sup> Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA). Child Poverty in Namibia: A child-centred analysis of the NHIES 2009/10. Published 2012. Accessed online: <http://uni.cf/2wkHxSX>

<sup>12</sup> GRN, Namibia Demographic and Health Survey 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education Arts and Culture Republic of Namibia, UNICEF Namibia, UNESCO Institute for Statistics. School Drop-Out and Out-of-School Children in Namibia: A National Review. 2015. \*Figure is for ages 17-19

<sup>14</sup> Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5). Pillar 2, Social Transformation.

<sup>15</sup> Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP). Pillar 3, Social Progression.

**So, Ladies and Gentlemen, and in conclusion,**

Let me end where I started this evening's remarks:

- By thanking ADS for hosting tonight's Gala Dinner; an event that allows so many of us to come together and share our uniqueness in international solidarity.
- By recognizing that tonight is a celebration of what is most precious to us, our children, and therefore it is important to give generously.
- By reminding that a healthy, educated and empowered youth will fuel a nation and indeed our world.

**I thank you.**