

## African middle-income countries share development experiences

**19 - 20 February, Swakopmund:** Government and UN representatives from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland (BLNSS) came together to share their experiences in development as middle-income countries (MICs) and to identify areas of potential collaboration both within and across countries.

At the opening of the experience sharing forum, Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, the Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of the National



*Hon. Kandjoze speaking on a panel with government planning officials from BLNSS*

Planning Commission (NPC), said that the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) values the UN's technical support and recognizes the importance of continued partnership in achieving national, regional and international development agendas.

Highlighting that the UN will look for pragmatic ways to work in partnership with countries, the Regional UN Development Group (R-UNDG) MICs Champion Leila Pakkala said, "The UN should and must do more in supporting governments to leverage resources across the continent."

UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) Kiki Gbeho highlighted that, "Despite remarkable progress in development, including reducing poverty and achieving middle-income status, Namibia remains one of the most unequal countries in the world." Participants witnessed this on a visit to Swakopmund's informal settlement led by Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo Region.

Namibia, as the host country, took the lead in supporting the UNDG Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa and united people from across Southern Africa in the Land of the Brave. The experience sharing forum was not only an opportunity to identify areas of achievement but also areas of improvement to ensure that no one in Namibia is left behind.

Being classified as a middle-income country has called for a shift in the way UN Namibia does business, towards a more strategic programming approach to support Namibia's 'war on poverty'.

A number of action points were agreed upon including a call from the BLNSS governments for advocacy in changing the formula or practice of classifying countries based on their per capita income which does not give a true reflection of human development challenges such as inequality and poverty. **SDG 17 'Partnerships'**