



Remarks

By

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**Commemoration of the International Day of Persons with
Disabilities**

6 December 2017

**Keetmanshoop
//Karas Region**

Hon. Lucia Basson, Governor of //Karas Region;

Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Deputy Minister of Disability Affairs;

Your Worship, Gaudentia Krohne, the Mayor of Keetmanshoop;

**Hon. Hilma Nicanor, Councilor of Keetmanshoop Urban
Constituency;**

Hon. Emilie Tuapewa Mupewa;

Luderitz Disability Association;

Senior Government Officials, & Traditional Authorities;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I would like to start by thanking the Office of the Vice-President, in particular, the Department of Disability Affairs; and the Karas Region, for organizing this year's Commemoration of 'International Day of Persons with Disabilities'.

This Day, first commemorated in 1992, aims to promote a better understanding of, and mobilize support for, the dignity, rights and well-being of the one billion people globally, with disabilities.

This year's theme, "*Transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society for all*", calls on us to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities in society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has recently adopted the 2030 Development Agenda and has identified 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all.

Goal 4 which speaks to equal access to quality education.

Goal 8 aimed at promoting full access to the job market for people with disabilities.

Goal 10, that stresses the need to include people with disabilities into society.

Goal 11 which aims to ensure accessible cities by looking at services such as transport systems, public spaces and access to information.

And Goal 17 on partnerships reminds us that to reach these goals, we must all work together.

Are all clear examples of the importance, this new Development Agenda, attaches to advancing the well-being of people with disabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to disability, Namibia is already showcasing best practice on the African continent.

- Ten years ago Namibia signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD - 2007).
- This year, Namibia was awarded Disability Ambassadorial Country Status by the African Disability Alliance.

Namibia has also;

- Implemented the National Disability Policy of 1997 and the National Disability Council Act No.26 of 2004;
- And, endorsed the Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

Through the implementation of national, regional and international development agendas, Namibia is empowering people with disabilities and promoting inclusion throughout society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although significant progress has been made, persons with disabilities continue to face challenges.

- Approximately 5% of Namibians have disabilities. And this number continues to increase. While this fact alone is not a challenge, access to information, transport & employment for people with disabilities often are.
- 87 percent of children with disabilities between the ages of 0-4 years have never attended early childhood development (ECD) programmes.
- The unemployment rate of persons with disabilities is 39%, compared to the national unemployment rate of 28%.

There is work still to be done.

Director of Ceremonies, to focus 'Development', Namibia has launched a War on Poverty; elaborated The National Development Plan 5, the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) and the Blue Print on Poverty Eradication & Wealth Redistribution;

And His Excellency the President has said that no one should feel left out.

We will not be able accelerate development, nor eradicate poverty, if an important segment of the population is excluded.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, the UN System in Namibia, is committed to empowering all Namibians including persons with disabilities.

Whether this means:

- supporting the generation of data so we understand and capture the issues that need to be addressed;
- whether this means supporting the use of data to resolve, challenges such as access to information, employment, transport for persons with disabilities;

-or whether this simply means raising awareness and advocating for inclusion;

The UN in Namibia is committed to ensuring that disability does not become a synonym for 'cannot' in Namibia.

Therefore, the UN in Namibia, your partner of choice, is committed to Vision 2030 and equality for all; a Namibian nation, driven by healthy and educated people and where no one, most of all persons with disabilities, feel left out.

I thank you!