



Launch of the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) and the “Virtual Learning Community of Educators in Namibia”

Windhoek, 23 April, 2015 – UNESCO Windhoek office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Faculty of Education, University of Namibia (UNAM), launched the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) ‘Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges’, and the ‘Virtual Learning Community of Educators in Namibia’, established in the framework of the UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust project in Namibia, on April 22, 2015 in Windhoek. The 2015 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report is an independent publication commissioned by UNESCO on behalf of the international community and has tracked progress on the six EFA goals for the past 15 years.

After UNESCO’s Windhoek Office’s newly appointed Head of Office, Dr. Jean-Pierre Ilboudo officially introduced the panel, Prof. Hubert Gijzen, UNESCO’s regional director for Southern Africa, was next to speak. Prof. Gijzen emphasised the importance of continued efforts towards educational development through presenting some key findings. He reflected over findings which show that globally, just one third of countries have achieved all of the measurable Education for All (EFA) goals set in 2000. None achieved them in sub-Saharan Africa, and only seven countries in the region achieved even the most watched goal, that of ‘Universal Primary Enrolment’. Sixteen of the twenty lowest ranked countries in progress towards ‘Education for All’ are in sub-Saharan Africa. Prof. Gijzen emphasized 2015 as a defining moment in time, with the international community moving into the Post-2015 agenda of transitioning from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Another ready speaker who made a speech on behalf of the Permanent Secretary was Ms. Edda Bohn, Director of Programmes and Quality Assurance within the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. She presented Namibia’s progress in achieving the EFA goals, after which reflections were provided by government officials and representatives of civil society. Although all speakers including Ms. Bohn agreed that significant progress had been made, they all confirmed that further work was needed and emphasised the importance of renewal and sustenance of commitments.

In light of 15 years of progress towards Education for All, the second part of the event focused on the ‘Capacity Development for Quality in Pre and Lower Primary Teacher Education in Namibia’ project, under the Funds-in-Trust agreement between UNESCO and the Government of the People’s Republic of China. The project is part of a framework that aims to accelerate progress towards the attainment of quality education for all and education-related Millennium Development Goals, through the enhancement of capacity of the teacher education system in training an adequate numbers of qualified teachers. Since the official project launch on 24 February 2014, the project is being implemented by the UNESCO Windhoek Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and University of Namibia’s Faculty of Education.

With a focus on the ‘Capacity Development for Quality in Pre and Lower Primary Teacher Education in Namibia’ project, Dr. Charmaine Villet, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia was introduced. The Dean presented the project’s progress and

achievements against the expected results and indicated the planned project activities for the next months.

Dr. John Nyambe, director of the Continuous Professional Development Unit at UNAM who was next to give talk, presented the project's newly established 'Virtual Learning Community of Educators in Namibia'. The sustainable virtual forum for Namibian lower primary teachers, lecturers and other stakeholders aims at promoting a learning community of practitioners to facilitate discussion and communication amongst key stakeholders in the educational field. It does this through the provision of easy access to materials and ideas for Namibian educators. The forum will be institutionalized within UNAM's Continuous Professional Development Unit, enhancing its sustainability.

The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Mr. Xin Shunkang, was yet another willing speaker after Dr. John Nyambe. Representing Chinese government, Mr. Shunkang celebrated the partnership of the Chinese government with UNESCO and congratulated the implementing partners for the achievements.

Closing talks were given by the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi as well as the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa. Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts and minimization of work done in isolation, as a means of fast-tracking overall progress towards overcoming challenges within the education sector. Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi emphasized the importance of both the role of teachers in providing quality education and quality training of these teachers.

Both Honourable Ministers endorsed the launching of the "Virtual Learning Community of Educators in Namibia" indicating their excitement in seeing the impact of the forum.