



Eenhana youth trained on gender equality and female representation in politics

23 November, Eenhana: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Namibia monitored a workshop organized by the Women's Action for Development (WAD) and the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) on 23 November 2018 in Eenhana, Ohangwena Region.

The workshop aimed at creating regional awareness under the theme of promoting the rights of women and political representation in Namibia. Youth from different constituencies in the Ohangwena Region attended the workshop, with 80% of participants being female.

The Project Manager, Bennet Bhebhe, explained that the objective of the workshop was to contribute towards equipping the inhabitants of Ohangwena Region with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to fully participate in the electoral process as candidates representing their respective political parties. The trainers, Peingondjabi Sheya and Klaudia Nangobe took the group through various topics such as the need for female participation in political representation, the political overview of Namibia and the basis for gender equality in Namibia. The attendees participated in various exercises and activities that aimed to test their newly gained skills on various topics.

The workshop is in line with the WAD's objectives, as agreed between the UNDEF and the WAD in their two-year agreement, to promote gender equality and equity between men and women in Namibian politics and decision-making positions. This workshop is one of a series that will occur across the country, aiming to target 700 people by having one workshop in each region and targeting to have 50 attendees.

While more women have entered political positions in recent years in Namibia, they still hold a mere 14% of Regional Councils and only 22% of seats in Cabinet in 2014/2015, far short of parity. In order to achieve gender equality in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 by 2030, urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that restrict women's rights in private and public scopes is still required, especially in rural Namibia.

At the end of the workshop, the attendees indicated their interest in representing their constituencies. They also hope to be elected into the 50/50 clubs, which aim to spread awareness to communities about the need for 50/50 gender equality in political representation. Moreover, the 50/50 clubs aim to mobilize support for female candidates in regional elections.

Furthermore, the project aims at creating an environment for political parties to adopt internal policies and legislative frameworks that are conscious of gender equality in nominating party leaders and representatives. The ultimate, long-term goal is to influence the political parties to align their constitutions to achieve a 50/50 gender representation.