



**Remarks**

**By**

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**UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident  
Representative**

**Launch of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based  
Violence**

**and**

**Launch of Africa Human Development Report**

**Moses Garoëb**

**Constituency, Khomas Region**

**Windhoek, Namibia**

**25 November 2016**

Director of Ceremonies

First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, Madam Monica Geingos

Hon. Doreen Sioka, Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

Lieutenant General Sebastian Ndeitunga, Inspector General of the  
Namibia Police

Hon. David Martin, Constituency Councilor of Moses Garoeb

NANGOF Representatives

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Dawie Fourie, Junior Major of the Municipality of Windhoek

Members of the media

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to first thank the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for inviting the UN to speak at this important event. The UN system in Namibia, your partner of choice, is honored to join the Government and Stakeholders to commemorate the International Day to.

Today, I will: speak about the launch of the 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV); read the UN Secretary General's statement for this international observance; and introduce the launch of the 2016 Africa Human Development Report on:

Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa.

**Esteemed guests,**

Why are we talking about GBV and 16 Days of Activism? Globally, the world has adopted Agenda 2030 with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals; and nationally, His Excellency the President, Dr. Hage Geingob has declared War against Poverty and challenged us to 'Harmbee' in order to eradicate poverty and address inequality.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that women are great multipliers of development progress. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of families and communities; women improve prospects for the next generation<sup>1</sup>.

A child who has a mother with some formal education is more likely to survive to their fifth birthday, receive adequate nutrition, and be immunized and enrolled in school<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> UNFPA: Gender Equality (2016) & UNFPA Welcomes World Leaders' Action Plan for Progress on Maternal Health, Poverty (2010)

<sup>2</sup> Save the Children State of the World's Mothers report: 2014

We will therefore not accelerate development nor reduce inequality if we do not raise awareness about, nor address GBV.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

When it comes to Gender and the fight for equality, Namibia has good stories to tell:

- This country has adopted and ratified international and regional human rights frameworks including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the SADC Declaration on Gender & Development.
- Namibia has a National Gender Policy (2010-2020); and National Gender and GBV Plans of Action (2010-2020; 2012-2016).
- Namibia is among the top 5 countries in Africa in terms of gender parity in parliament<sup>3</sup>. Women occupy two of the top four leadership positions in government.
- And now Namibia has given the world a Global Advocate for young and adolescent women, the First Lady of Namibia, and launched the “Be Free” movement providing young girls and boys the space to have frank and hard conversations on teen

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<sup>3</sup> Africa Gender Equality Index Report: 2015

sex, GBV, substance abuse, and HIV and AIDS, among other issues.

While we can be proud of these achievements, we cannot become complacent.

In Namibia, 33% of ever-married (women aged 15-49 have experienced physical, sexual, and/ or emotional violence from their spouse and have also suffered one or more physical injuries. Fifteen per cent of women who experienced physical violence never sought help. A total of 28% of women and 22 % of men aged 15-49 justified beating as an acceptable way for a husband to discipline his wife<sup>4</sup>. About 7% of girls in Namibia are married before the age of 18<sup>5</sup>.

### **Therefore Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we work towards inclusive and sustainable growth that leaves no one behind, let us be reminded that Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is a prerequisite for the advancement and well-being of individuals, families, communities and countries.

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<sup>4</sup> NDHS: 2013.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2016 Report

And let us work together to put the voices of the victims, survivors, families and communities at the centre of our interventions.

**Director of ceremonies,**

I will now read the UN Secretary Generals statement for this occasion.

## **THE SECRETARY-GENERALS STATEMENT**

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At long last, there is growing global recognition that violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, public health pandemic and serious obstacle to sustainable development. Yet there is still much more we can and must do to turn this awareness into meaningful prevention and response.

Violence against women and girls imposes large-scale costs on families, communities and economies. When women cannot work as a result of violence, their employment may be put at risk, jeopardizing much-needed income, autonomy and their ability to leave abusive relationships.

Violence against women also results in lost productivity for businesses, and drains resources from social services, the justice system and health-care agencies. Domestic and intimate partner violence remains widespread, compounded by impunity for those crimes. The net result is enormous suffering as well as the exclusion of women from playing their full and rightful roles in society.

The world cannot afford to pay this price. Women and girls cannot afford it – and should not have to. Yet such violence persists every day, around the world. And efforts to address this challenge, although rich in political commitment, are chronically under-funded.

Since 2008, I have led the UNiTE campaign to End Violence against Women, which calls for global action to increase resources and promote solutions. I call on governments to show their commitment by dramatically increasing national spending in all relevant areas, including in support of women's movements and civil society organizations. I also encourage world leaders to contribute to UN Women and to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. We look as well to the private sector, philanthropies and concerned citizens to do their part.

Today, we are seeing the world lit up in orange, symbolizing a bright future for women and girls. With dedicated investment, we can keep these lights shining, uphold human rights and eliminate violence against women and girls for good.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The case has just been made for linking women's empowerment with development.

This year's African Human Development Report is therefore rightly focused on Accelerating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa.

We are therefore seizing this opportunity to brief and then launch 'The 2016 African Human Development Report'.

We see this launch as a movement for change rather than a report to be read and look forward to partnering with all of you on its realization.

I thank you!