



Health ministry, UNFPA launch *The Condomize Campaign*

8 August, Windhoek: The Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and partners recently launched *The Condomize Campaign* in Namibia.

The campaign will promote demand generation for condom use among young people; advocate HIV prevention, with emphasis on consistent condom use; and build the skills of the media, youth peer educators and service providers on condom promotion and distribution.

The launch coincided with the official commemoration of the World Population Day on 8 August 2018 in Ongwediva, Oshana Region and was attended by more than 500 people including youth.

Although Namibia has made good progress in achieving the fast-track commitments to end AIDS by 2030, the country falls short of the target for adult new HIV infections. Hence there is a need to scale-up combination prevention to meet the target.

There is also a need to address issues of teenage pregnancy, as it has a direct bearing on the maternal mortality, accounting for 8% of all maternal deaths. Adolescents in rural areas (20%) and with only a primary level education (26%) tend to initiate childbearing earlier than their urban (16%) and better educated peers (17%). Some regions have teenage pregnancies of more than 36%; Kunene (39%), Omaheke (38%) and Kavango (34%).

At the occasion, Hon. Juliet Kavetuna Deputy Minister of Health said even though the policy and program environment for scaled up condom promotion is conducive, social, cultural and personal factors still play a huge role in hindering progress.

“Correct and consistent use of male and female condoms can reduce the risk of sexual transmission of HIV & STIs by 80- 90%,” she said.

The UNFPA Namibia Representative, Dennia Gayle, commented, “With the current high incident of teenage pregnancy in the country and increasing number of HIV infections among young people, particularly adolescent girls - :It is clear that we need to take action.”

“UNFPA is a strong believer that when we invest in adolescents and young people’s Sexual and Reproductive Health, including ensuring access to contraceptives such as male and female condoms, it is the smartest investments Namibia can make. We need our young people to stay in school, build their skills and competencies and prepare them for a labour market that is vibrant and efficient,” she stated.

The initiative is a partnership between UNFPA and The Condom Project, in collaboration with Bahamas Red Cross; DKT International, a social marketing NGO; Durex, the Female Health Company, the International AIDS Society and UNAIDS. It was born during the 2010 International AIDS Conference in Vienna.

The Campaign will be implemented in three regions, Khomas, Zambezi and Ohangwena, and is expected to be rolled out to other regions in the near future.