



Remarks

By:

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Representative**

**Launch of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign
Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**

**28 November 2017
Outapi, Omusati**

Namibia

Director of Ceremonies,

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

Hon. E. Endjala, Governor of Omusati Region;

Lieutenant General S. Ndeitunga, Inspector General of the Namibian Police Force;

Adv. Martha Imalwa, Prosecutor-General;

Her Worship Selma Nelago Asino, Mayor of Outapi;

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be here in the Omusati Region, home to the beautiful Ruacana falls; as part of efforts to commemorate 16 Days of Activism in Namibia.

This day, first celebrated in 1991, aims to raise awareness about the importance of ending violence against women.

Namibia's theme for this year's commemoration, "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make education safe for all", is directly relevant to global, regional and development frameworks

such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), AU agenda 2063, and Namibia's NDP5 and HPP.

These strategic plans recognise that poverty will not be eradicated nor will prosperity be achieved for all, if women are not empowered, educated and women continue to be victims of violence.

Physical, sexual and psychological acts, associated with GBV such as early marriage, beatings, and rape are acts, most commonly perpetrated against women, simply because they are women. In its absolute and worst form, GBV ends with death.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During last week's press conference in Windhoek to sensitize Namibians on 16 Days of activism, I highlighted that:

Educated and empowered women are great multipliers of development and improve prospects for the next generation; Namibia's children and Namibia's future work force¹.

Educated women make more informed decisions about marriage, when to have their first child, and how many children to have.

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

Director of ceremonies, violence against women also results in lost productivity for businesses, and drains resources from social services, the justice system and health-care agencies.

And, “Research indicates that such violence, could cost around 2% of the global gross domestic product (GDP); equivalent to 1.5 trillion USD”².

Our hope was to pass a clear message that, GBV has a detrimental impact on the global economy. Therefore, addressing GBV is not only about what is right – it is also about what makes economic sense.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also mentioned last week that Namibia has good stories to tell when it comes to Gender, including the fact that Namibia is the third most gender-equal country in Africa³.

However, one just has to pick up the morning paper to recognize that there is still a lot of work to be done. For example 33% of

² UN Women. *Remarks by UN Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Lakshmi Puri at the high-level discussion on the “Economic Cost of Violence against Women”*. <http://bit.ly/2hNGNki>

³ African Development Bank Group. *Africa Gender Equality Index 2015*. <http://bit.ly/2BhcvPq>
About 7% of girls in Namibia are married before the age of 18. One third of Namibian rape victims are under the age of eighteen. Namibian Parliamentarians have committed to: mainstream gender into laws; and support sexual & reproductive health and rights, (SRH-R) as part of the UN [This includes through the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the ‘Spotlight Initiative’ and the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative. The UN has also launched a victim-centred approach to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse committed by those serving under the UN]’s He forShe campaign.

women aged 15-49 years have experienced some form of violence⁴.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Windhoek last week I had two asks:

First, that we strengthen and prioritize our evidence base – as solid data is required; to manage strategies and to indicate where GBV challenges us most.

As the saying goes – if you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

Our second ask was that;

- Everyone 'Reports it to stop it'⁵ and actively supports campaigns such as Namibia's First Lady's ⁶ Break Free 2 Be Free from violence movement;
- Everyone tells someone about the 106 GBV helpline; And,
- Everyone has 'Zero Tolerance for Gender-Based Violence'.

⁴ NDP5

⁵ Launch of the campaign for zero tolerance to Gender Based Violence 2009
Namibia has adopted and ratified international and regional human rights frameworks such as CEDAW and has a National Gender Policy and National Gender and GBV Plans of Action .

⁶ FLON is the UNAIDS Global Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls.

And today I have one more ask: that we include men in the conversation to address gender inequalities and gender based violence.

We cannot exclude half of the population who are involved in the problem from the solution.

I thank you.

I will now read the UN Secretary-General's remarks⁷ for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Every woman and every girl has the right to a life free of violence. Yet this rupture of human rights occurs in a variety of ways in every community. It particularly affects those who are most marginalized and most vulnerable.

[...Around] the world, more than 1 in 3 women face violence throughout their lifetime; 750 million women were married before age of 18, and more than 250 million have undergone Female Genital Mutilation.

There is increasing recognition that violence against women is a major barrier to the fulfilment of human rights, and a direct

⁷ Full remarks: <http://bit.ly/2hP9mOD>

challenge to women's inclusion and participation in sustainable development and sustaining peace.

[...] It is time to further our collective action to end violence against women and girls – for good. That takes all of us working together in our own countries, regions and communities, at the same time, towards the same goal.

The United Nations is committed to addressing violence against women in all its forms and has launched several initiatives.

These initiatives should help us deliver transformative change. But much more needs to be done. We need strong political will, increased resources and coordinated action.

Violence against women is fundamentally about power. It will only end when gender equality and the full empowerment of women becomes a reality. [...] It is time for united action from all of us, so that women and girls around the world can live free from all forms of violence.

Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for your solidarity, and do everything you can to make our goals a reality. **Thank you very much.**