



Remarks

By:

Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho

UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

***Awarding of
Disability Ambassadorial Country Status to
the Republic of Namibia***

2 August, 2017

**Safari Court Hotel and Conference Centre
Windhoek, Namibia**

Hon. Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia

Rt. Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia

Hon. Frans Kapofi, Minister of President Affairs

Hon. Alexia Manombe-Ncube, Deputy Minister of Disability Affairs

Senior Government Officials

Ms. Grace Massah, African Disability Alliance Chairperson

Mr. Tobias Mwaudikange, Chairperson of the National Disability Council of Namibia Chairperson (NDCN)

Mr. Daniel Trum, Chairperson of the National Federation of People with Disabilities in Namibia (NFPDN)

Distinguished Invited Guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you, at this award ceremony, to confer Ambassadorial Country Status on Namibia, in recognition of its work for people with Disabilities.

Today's event, not only provides an opportunity to congratulate Namibia, but also presents an opportunity to raise awareness about people with disabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globally there are approximately 650 million people with disabilities that is 10 per cent of the global population. An estimated 80 per cent of this population live in developing countries, many in conditions of poverty.¹

And here in Namibia over 98,000 people live with some form of disability.²

In both developed and developing countries, evidence suggests that persons with disabilities tend to be poorer than their counterparts without disabilities.

It is estimated that of the world's poorest people, 1 in 5 is a person with a disability.³

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to disability, Namibia is once more showcasing best practice on the African continent. Through the implementation of national, regional and international development agendas Namibia is empowering people with disabilities and promoting inclusion through various levels of society.

¹ Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda: Note by the Secretariat, UN Economic and Social Council, November 2008.

² Namibia Statistics Agency. *Namibia 2011 Disability Report*. 2016. Accessed: <http://bit.ly/2he5uZO>

³ Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda: Note by the Secretariat, UN Economic and Social Council, November 2008

Examples of these are the:

- The National Disability Policy of 1997
- The National Disability Council Act No.26 of 2004 and
- The ratification by Namibia of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These policies have translated into concrete action. Due to various interventions, the proportion of persons aged 5 years and above, that have never attended school has decreased from 30.4 percent in 2001 to 28.9 percent in 2011.⁴

In 2015, Namibia accorded further prominence to issues faced by persons with disabilities by establishing the Ministry of Disability Affairs under the Office of the Vice President.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Although Namibia has made significant progress when it comes to signing international policy frameworks and mainstreaming disability into policies; people with disabilities continue to face challenges.

⁴ Namibia Statistics Agency. *Namibia 2011 Disability Report*. 2016. Accessed: <http://bit.ly/2he5uZ0>

According to National Statistics Agency (NSA) only 33 percent of people with disabilities in Namibia are receiving disability grants.

The same reports states that in rural areas, the proportion of persons with disabilities, without any formal education stands at 82.3 percent and at 17.7 percent in urban areas.⁵

In addition, 87 percent of children with disabilities between the ages of 0-4 years have never attended early childhood development (ECD) programmes.⁶

His Excellency the President has launched a war on poverty, and the National Development Plan 5 has been finalized and the HPP has been elaborated. We will not be able accelerate development, nor eradicate poverty, if a portion of the population is left out.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has recently adopted the 2030 Development Agenda for and has identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.

⁵ Namibia Statistics Agency. *Namibia 2011 Disability Report*. 2016. Accessed: <http://bit.ly/2he5uZO>

⁶ Namibia Population and Housing Census: 2011

Four SDGs are clearly linked to advancing the well-being of people with disabilities namely:

Goal 4 on 'Quality Education', aims to guarantee equal and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and providing assistance to persons with disabilities.

Goal 8 on 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', promotes inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment in order to allow persons with disabilities to fully access the job market, across a variety of sectors.

Goal 10 on 'Reduced Inequalities', emphasizes the need for the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Goal 11 on 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' aims to create accessible cities; affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems; as well as universal access to safe, inclusive, and green public spaces.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by once again congratulating the Government of the Republic of Namibia for being awarded this important status.

Let me reaffirm the UNs commitment to support Namibia to empower its vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities.

Let me reaffirm the UNs continued belief in Namibia's vision. A vision of a peaceful and industrialized nation, driven by a healthy and educated people, a nation where no person with disability feels left out.

I thank you.