

Remarks

By

Ms. Anita Kiki Gbeho

UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Official launch of the Human Development Report in Windhoek, Namibia

Deputy Minister of Economic Planning, Hon. Lucia Lipumbu

Senior Government Officials

Assistant Administrator of UNDP and Deputy Director of the Regional
Bureau of Africa, Ms. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon

Head of UN Agencies

UN Staff members present

Members of Civil Society Organizations

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Master of Ceremony;

I would like to thank you for joining us today at the Namibia launch of the 2015 Human Development Report.

The Human Development Report is UNDP's flagship knowledge document that provides analysis and recommendations that are both objective and independent.

The theme of the 2015 HDR is "Work for Human Development". And this year's report will explore the links between work and development, the changing notion of work including the impact of the fast changing ICT world, and how to ensure that work is green and sustainable.

Namibia has declared a war on poverty and the Ministry of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare has led a national consultation that culminated in a wealth redistribution and poverty eradication conference.

During consultations, the challenges of unemployment, particularly among women and youth were repeatedly raised as contributors to poverty and inequality. Suggestions were made on how to increase employment opportunities for all.

These recommendations included better equipping the unemployed and under-employed with marketable skills through expansion of vocational training. Others called for better coordination and communication between potential employers and the unemployed.

In all discussions the theme of this year's HDR Report was underscored, i.e the importance of decent work in enabling livelihoods, eradicating poverty and maintaining dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the case of Namibia, the redefinition of work must take into account the opportunities emanating from the digital age.

As e-commerce increasingly becomes the norm of business interaction, implications for those that do not have ICT skills or even daily access to the Internet must be considered.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For far too long, we have equated work with paid employment in the formal sector.

This has acted to minimize the importance of the informal sector, and activities undertaken for basic survival and wellbeing at the level of the household.

As human beings, for the most part we are all raised as children, we are cared for when ill and are catered for when we are elderly.

However there is a lack of clarity when it comes to recognizing the importance of, and adequately remunerating, the work of care givers and others that keep society whole.

Therefore in Namibia, the expansion of social safety nets, the provision of universal early childhood development programs that take into account working mothers, and the role of pensioners in social cohesion and inter-generational knowledge transfer must continue to be part of the development strategy.

Master of Ceremonies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Any notion of work must be consistent with the recently launched Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs; in particular goal 8's explicit emphasis on work. (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and product employment, and decent work for all)

As noted in the recent climate conference in Paris, (COP 21 agreement), this revised notion of work must include measures to halt global warming, value green development as well as refit the economy to prosper on a low carbon trajectory.

In Namibia, this would mean harnessing renewable energy resources available through solar and wind, and perhaps working with coastal neighbours to establish a regional network of desalination plants as the 1st step in the development of a Southern African Water Pool, (to provide adequate supplies of potable water for domestic use and export, and revising curriculums and teaching methods and materials to equip our children with the skills required for an inclusive, prosperous and green 21st century Namibia.)

In conclusion;

I would like to leave you with the following thought:

As we prepare to wage war on poverty, there is a pressing need for institutions, civil society, private sector, think tanks and government institutions to reflect on the nature and notion of paid and unpaid work in Namibia, and the implications for the achievement of Vision 2030.

We hope that this report will generate dialogue and debate on the challenges identified, as all previous Human Development Reports have done.

In that way the Report will help Namibia adjust to the changing world of work in ways which will advance human development and help us win the war on poverty.

I thank you for your kind attention.