



Road map for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission

2 August, Windhoek: The Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), held a national stakeholders’ validation workshop of the road map for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission (eMTCT) of HIV and congenital syphilis.

About 45 participants from Government, Civil Society Organisations, UN agencies and Academia took part in the workshop which aimed to validate and provide input to the draft National eMTCT road map. Since June, consultations have been taking place at the regional and national level to solicit inputs.

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) is a critical intervention to the HIV response that can vastly impact the trajectory of the epidemic and protect future generations from HIV. It is also a key component of addressing the health of women and children. Namibia is close to achieving 90-90-90 targets, and we will only reach epidemic control if we ensure that no one is left behind. The road map will be used to guide the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) in efforts to eliminate mother to child transmission of HIV and congenital Syphilis in Namibia.

Maria Kavezembi, the Director of the Primary Health Care Directorate of the MoHSS, opened the meeting. Dr. Mary Nana Ama Brantuo in her remarks on behalf of UN family said, “The UN is excited to support government and its partners in the development and implementation of the eMTCT roadmap. As the UN, we believe this joint effort of the different agencies harnesses our respective strengths and comparative advantages to bring to bear on the end product.”

The main issue that emerged in the two days’ workshop was that the eMTCT road map shouldn’t be implemented as a stand-alone document, but rather be integrated in the existing national, regional and district plans. The road map should be implemented under the platform of Reproductive Maternal, Neonatal Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition and the National Strategic Framework on AIDS 2017 – 2022. Strengthening health workers’ capacities and data quality for decision making was also top on the agenda.

Following this consultation, the roadmap draft will be finalised and shared with stakeholders; the PMTCT Technical Working Group will recommend it to the Ministerial management for approval and launch. It was highly recommended to establish the National Validation Committee to review the Validation to path to elimination assessment tools, and to provide an oversight in conducting a baseline review of the data, laboratory, program and human rights status of Namibia in preparations for the validation exercise.

This activity contributes to **SDG 3 ‘Good Health and Well-being’** and UNPAF Pillar 2 Social Transformation.