



**Remarks By:**

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**On the Occasion of**

**The Southern African Development  
Community (SADC)  
2gether 4 SRHR Programme Meeting**

***SADC Ministers of Health Meeting***

**8 November 2018  
Windhoek**

**Hon. Bernhard Haufiku, the Minister of Health and Social Services;**

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC);**

**Esteemed Government Officials;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Regional United Nations Representatives, UN Country Team Members and UN Colleagues;**

**Members of the media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

On behalf of the UN Country Team (UNCT), I welcome you to Namibia, the Land of the Brave! We are very pleased to be part of the “2gether 4 SRHR” programme and to be here with you today to discuss its implementation to ensure that the leaders of tomorrow – our youth – can prosper.

We hope that this meeting serves as a platform to learn from each other, exchange ideas and discover new ways to support SADC countries in youth engagement and empowerment. At the same time, this platform provides us with the opportunity to evaluate at the best practices for South-South Cooperation and cross border collaboration.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This meeting has come at an opportune time for us in Namibia, as we will begin implementing the second United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) with the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN), UNPAF 2019-2023, starting this coming January 2019.

Given that the youth take centre-stage in the UNPAF – we aim to support the Government in tackling youth unemployment and ensuring that this large percentage of the population has access to quality education, health services and social protection. As youth programming cuts across all the Pillars of UNPAF, we plan to implement a joint programme.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is well known that individually and collectively, many countries in this region are still contending with challenging social indicators related to maternal health, teenage pregnancy and new HIV infections; all of which if left unattended, can roll back some of the region's development gains.

With ample opportunities to hear best practices and engage with one another, these gathering serves as a platform for coordination and collaboration among the UN Agencies to 'Deliver as One' in support of Governments across the region. Specifically, it provides an opportunity to scale up high quality, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and information.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Eradicating poverty, promoting prosperity for all and ensuring that no one is left behind, in line with global Sustainable Development Agenda, can only be achieved if we ensure that our youth have access to the information and services needed to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Sustainable Development Goal 3 '*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*' calls for achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health care, reducing global maternal death rates, and ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

To achieve the United Nations' goals for the youth and SRHR, UN Agencies collaborate using their comparative advantage - not competing but complementing each other in supporting Ministries of Health across SADC. This collaboration and cooperation ensures increased efficiency and avoids duplication. The UN System in Namibia has taken up H.E. the President Dr. Hage Geingob's call to 'Harambee' in the same direction to ensure that no one is left behind. We, therefore, stand here today as 'One UN' to welcome you and to reaffirm our commitment being the 'Partner of Choice' in terms of youth empowerment and SRHR

**Ladies and Gentlemen, and In Conclusion,**

I wish to remind you all that Africa's population as a whole is very young, with 60% of the entire continent below the age of 25, making it the youngest continent in the world, in relation to its population makeup. The youth are key in building a brighter and more sustainable future. We must ensure that our future workers and parents, have health care, education and employment opportunities.

As we discuss one of the most important issues affecting young people in the world and indeed in our region, our message should be the same at all levels – we must include young people and adolescents. We must make them part of the discussions, consult them, and most importantly, we must do this with them. We are cognizant that this can no longer be a simple rhetoric; but an imperative.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish you fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable time here in Windhoek. I thank you.