

Staff members promise to Communicate as One for the SDGs at UNCG Town Hall

By: UNCG Namibia

On Wednesday, 19 April 2017, the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) Namibia hosted a Town Hall for all United Nations (UN) Namibia staff members in order to rally support of the UN's efforts to 'Communicate as One for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).'



UNCG Members along with UN Staff members.

The UNCG, which consists of focal points from agencies comprising the UN System in Namibia, is responsible for planning, implementing and reporting on communication-related joint activities in Namibia. These include internal communications (within and amongst different UN entities working in Namibia, including regional and headquarter entities) and external communications (with government, development partners, media and the wider public).

Welcoming UN staff to the UNCG Town Hall, the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) Kiki Gbeho complimented the relentless efforts of the staff members in mobilizing local capacity, and encouraged UN Namibia to double its efforts so as to give the country as many opportunities as possible for accelerating development.

The RC further highlighted the SDGs, as projects, policy proposals, outreach activities, research and all other UN activities all function to achieve these 17 Goals. The SDGs aim to end global poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.



Marcus Betts, Deputy Representative of UNICEF Namibia

Following the RC, the Deputy Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Namibia, Marcus Betts encouraged staff to unite together to achieve the SDGs, reemphasizing the SDGs as the guidelines for UN Namibia's efforts and attitudes.



Staff brainstorm ways to achieve the SDGs in their lives.

In an effort to personalize the SDGs from an abstract framework and resituate them in everyday life, Betts asked the crowd, "How do we bring the SDGs into our personal lives?"

The staff brainstormed in small groups and shared various recommendations including; further investment and popularization of using solar panels as a form of renewable energy, creating a culture within communities focused on forming vegetable gardens and decreasing food wastage.

Anthea Basson, the National Information Officer and Head of UNIC Windhoek, then provided background on the UNCG and outlined the UNCG's 2017 Workplan. The UNCG aims to strengthen partnership through increased UN capacity to communicate as 'One', increase public understanding of the work of the UN in Namibia and enhance interagency communications through increased knowledge management efforts and strategic visibility.



Anthea Basson, the National Information Officer discusses the UNCG Workplan

The SDGs and the strategic partnership framework between the UN and the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN), the United Nations Partnership Framework 2014-2018 (UNPAF), play integral roles in shaping the UNCG's 2017 Workplan. Specifically, the UNCG's communication is guided by the UNCT Communication Strategy, which was developed as a result of a review of the UNPAF Communication Strategy.



The UNCG shares insight about communication with UN Namibia Staff.

The UNCG Focal Points then elaborated on their agency's goals in communicating the activities, message and image of sustainable development to the Namibian people.

The UNCG encouraged the staff to continually engage with the UNCG and each other in order to ensure consistent, complimentary and coherent communication on the efforts of the UN in the Republic of Namibia.

Furthermore, the UNCG highlighted that there are many different communication mediums and each holds the potential to intellectually and emotionally influence the actions of an individual. In particular, the impact and relatability of human interest stories cannot be understated as they effectively allow people to practically express their experiences in their own words, potentially in their native language and from their perspectives.

The UNCG Secretariat, UNIC Windhoek, then led an '#IPromise Ceremony'. With an understanding of the importance of communication in development efforts and promoting positive change in Namibia, staff members committed to communicating and achieving the SDGs by signing a canvas that will be displayed in the lobby of the UN House in Klein Windhoek.



A UN Namibia Staff Member promising to promote the SDGs in her life.