



Press Release

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UN Public Service Day: Encouraging youth to become public servants

23 June 2017, Windhoek: The United Nations (UN) Public Service Day, observed annually on 23 June, recognizes that democracy and successful governance are built on the foundation of a competent public service. The day aims to celebrate the value and virtue of service to the community, highlights the contribution of public service in the development process, recognizes the work of public servants, and encourages young people to pursue careers in the public sector.

The observance originates from the declaration of the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service held in Tangier, Morocco in 1994, where the Ministers agreed to celebrate African Public Service Day to recognize the value and virtue of service to the community. The UN subsequently declared 23 June as the UN Public Service Day.

The UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) to Namibia, Kiki Gbeho stressed the importance of preparing youth to be public servants. “Today’s generation of youth is the largest in history. Investing in the youth today will ensure that we reap the benefits of empowered youth who are the leaders of tomorrow, including in the public service sector,” she said.

66% of the Namibian population is 30 years or younger. The youth population, across the globe, is a valuable asset upon which countries depend for the continuity of development as well as for the success of the public service sector. According to *The Namibia Labour Force Survey 2014*, the Namibian youth of working age, 15-34 years, constitutes roughly 37% of the population.

The Namibia Labour Force Survey 2014 also states that youth unemployment, out of the active population for youth, 15 - 34 years, stands at 39.2% in Namibia. As unemployment leaves people at risk of falling below the poverty line, the public sector is a viable employment option.

“It is therefore essential to partner with the youth to build a responsive and sustainable public service. If we encourage the youth to pursue careers in this sector, we will not only be harnessing a powerful tool for change – the voice of the youth – but we will also help to address issues of unemployment in Namibia,” she said.

She continued, “Addressing youth unemployment will subsequently address poverty in the country in line with the Harambee Prosperity Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP 5).”

Countries around the world depend on the constant and determined work of those dedicated to the service of people, i.e. the public sector. Gbeho further encouraged public servants to continue with the good work and to be innovative in attracting and preparing future public servants.

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