



PRESS RELEASE

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UN Namibia congratulates UNAIDS Special Advocate Geingos

At a luncheon today, the UN System in Namibia congratulated Ms. Monica Geingos on her appointment as a UNAIDS Special Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls and discussed the opportunities that her appointment brings in the fight to end AIDS / HIV.

Windhoek, 11 October 2016 – The United Nations (UN) System in Namibia congratulated the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, Madam Monica Geingos on her appointment as a UNAIDS Special Advocate for Young Women and Adolescent Girls at a luncheon today as well as discussed the opportunities her appointment brings to Namibia.

Ms. Geingos was named a UNAIDS Special Advocate in September 2016, around the same time as the first anniversary of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With her appointment, she will champion of Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free, an agenda to put the world on a Super-Fast-Track to end AIDS among children, adolescents and young women by 2020.

"It is a role I accepted with great relish as it speaks to our shared dream of a HIV-free generation, which is able to harness its full potential," Ms. Geingos said at the luncheon.

In 2015, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) found that 210,000 people in Namibia are living with HIV with a prevalence rate of 13.3% for adults aged 15 to 49.

Although Namibia has been unwaveringly committed to addressing the HIV and AIDS epidemic and has made great strides, women and girls continue to be disproportionately infected. In Sub-Saharan Africa, six women now live with HIV for every four to five infected men, and one-third to one-half of new mothers in the worst affected countries could die of AIDS in the coming years.

UNAIDS Country Coordinator, Dr. Barihuta Tharcisse mentioned the immense opportunity Ms. Geingos' appointment brings to Namibia. He said, "It is an opportunity to accelerate global and Namibia's efforts to achieve a shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths."

As the international community systematically links women to the development agenda, further efforts must be put into place to eliminate challenges and inequalities that women and girls face on a daily basis, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that 34% of girls in Namibia aged 15-19 years have experienced physical or sexual violence, putting them at a higher risk of infection.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) to Namibia, Ms. Kiki Gbeho said, "The First Lady, Ms. Geingos, has and continues to be a role model in the country. Her appointment opens new platforms for her to continue using her voice for positive change, on both local and international scales."

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