

## UNESCO commemorates World Press Freedom Day

**Windhoek, 8 May:** UNESCO Windhoek Office celebrated World Press Freedom Day (WPF) with the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN), the European Union (EU), academia and media professionals under the national theme “*Sustainability of the Media in Namibia*” on 8 May 2018 at Safari Court Hotel.



*Panel Discussion participants pose for a photo with the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Hon. Stanley Simataa.*

In his remarks, Hon. Stanley Simataa said that freedom of speech and expression are fundamental Human

Rights and freedom of the media and access to information are key fundamentals of any democracy as it contributes to a dynamic civil society. He stated that his ministry will soon sanction a thorough review and investigation of what has led to Namibia’s global press freedom ranking dropping from first in Africa to second, as it concerns government whose hope is to keep the country at the top for media freedom.

Hon. Simataa further urged journalists to reflect on the effectiveness of their mandate and build the capacity of young journalists to report effectively and objectively. Concluding his address, the Minister said, “On a day like this we should take stock and appreciate media freedom and that it’s a beacon of hope in upholding freedom of press globally.”

The celebrations ended with an insightful panel discussion where it was agreed that sustainability is not only a concern for Africa but the world, because of the change in landscape of social media.

UNESCO is actively involved in defending the freedom of expression, which is at the core of its mandate. The global theme for this year’s commemoration of WPF was “*Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and the Rule of Law*”, which is an open invitation to think of the relations between the media, justice and the rule of law. It was also an opportunity to examine the new challenges regarding the freedom of online press.

With the 79 journalists that were assassinated worldwide in 2017, UNESCO is committed to defending the safety of journalists and fighting against impunity for crimes committed against them. UNESCO also contributes to training and helps the authorities in different countries to adapt their laws on freedom of expression to international standards.

***SDG 16- Promote Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies***