

UNFPA hands over N\$7.4m contraceptives to Health Ministry

8 February, Windhoek – The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Namibia Country Office handed over sexual and reproductive health (SRH) commodities worth N\$7 million to the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS).

The donation, made possible through the Preventing Maternal Deaths in East and Southern Africa (PreMDESA) Project, included DMPA Depo-Provera and soloshots syringes (60,000 units), Noristerate and soloshots syringes (110,000 units), Copper T IUDs (5000 units), female condoms (200,000 units) and Implanon NTX (7000 units).

With this donation, more than 70,000 beneficiaries are expected to gain from access to modern contraceptives, averting over 22,000 unintended pregnancies, 4,000 unsafe abortions and 40 maternal deaths. This includes adolescent girls and young women to prevent early pregnancies.

Although Namibia has made tremendous progress in reproductive health efforts over the past 27 years, there are still barriers impeding the use of modern contraceptives. Unmet need for contraception remains high (12%) among women in Namibia, while 19% of adolescent girls (15-19 years old) have begun childbearing, with some regions reporting proportions of more than 36%, indicating that more vigorous efforts are needed to understand and to meet the needs of adolescents and young people.

Addressing the gathering, the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services Dr. Bernhard Haufiku stressed the need for the country to tighten its comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) to equip Namibians with the knowledge on SRH issues, as he feels the bulk of the people are ignorant and lack knowledge hence the high incidents of teenage pregnancies.

“It is a meaningful contribution to our arsenal in combating teenage pregnancies, especially at a time when we are facing economic hardships. We all know the statistics; this is the time to empower our youth, to empower them with skills and knowledge. I know in some areas in the country there is a certain level of ignorance where teachers do not mention sex at all. It is time we changed that culture. We must teach our youth that it is better to have a child when you are ready, when you can clothe, feed and provide the child with a roof over his/her head. We need progressive young people to develop our country,” Haufiku stated.

UNFPA Country Representative Ms. Dennia Gayle reiterated UNFPA's commitment to supporting the country to ensure that contraceptives are available and accessible to all women and girls who wish to avoid or delay pregnancy.

“UNFPA is a strong believer that when we invest in adolescents and young people sexual and reproductive health including ensuring access to contraceptives it is the smartest investment Namibia can make. We need our young people to stay in school, build their skills and competencies and prepare them for a labour market that is vibrant and efficient,” she said.



Deputy Director of Primary Health Care(PHC) Dr Juvenary Ruta, UNFPA Namibia Country Representative Ms. Dennia Gayle, Hon Minister of Health and Social Services Dr. Bernhard Haufiku and Director of PHC Ms. Maria Kavazembi at the handover ceremony.

Emma Mbekele UNFPA NAMIBIA



Ms Denna Gayle discusses with health minister Bernard Haufiku about some of the implants that were donated.

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