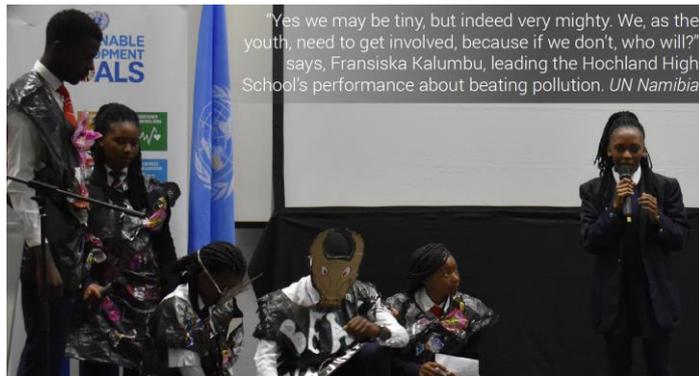


## World Environment Day calls for public to #BeatPlasticPollution

**Windhoek, 5 June:** The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) in partnership with the United Nations Namibia (UN Namibia), and the Environmental Investment Fund (EIF) observed the World Environment Day (WED) on 5 June 2018 in Windhoek.

Under the theme: “Beat Plastic Pollution: If you can’t reuse it, refuse it”, the commemoration raised awareness about the negative environmental impact of single use plastics. It also provided a platform for discussion about policy actions, investment opportunities, and behaviour changes that individuals and institutions can pursue to address plastic pollution.

The Minister of Environment and Tourism, Hon. Pohamba Shifeta said in remarks read on his behalf that the theme was extremely relevant, considering the high amount of plastic in the ocean. “Fish is a food source we generally consider to be healthy and safe but if it is contaminated with plastic, it can cause all sorts of risks to humans from cancer to strokes, hormonal imbalances and heart attacks”, he said.



Namibia has made great strides in protecting the environment, including implementing policies and frameworks such as the Pollution Control and Waste Management Policy, the National Climate Strategy and Action Plan and the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), through its Environmental Sustainability Pillar. Further, the MET is planning to introduce a plastic ban and is busy putting measures and systems in place for implementation in the future.

The UN Resident Coordinator a.i. in Namibia, Rachel Odede in a statement read on her behalf commended efforts by the Government for demonstrating leadership regarding the awareness and response to pollution and climate change. She further called for continued partnership in addressing issues of pollution. “Together, we can protect the environment and ‘beat plastic pollution’ to ensure that future generations can live in a healthy, clean and sustainable Namibia”, said Odede.

Presentations and performances by development partners and stakeholders enriched the commemoration. This included an in-depth presentation by EIF about levies to protect the environment, an outline by the Recycle Namibia Forum about the importance of the ‘5 Rs’ - Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, Refuse and Repurpose, as well as interactive performances from learners from Hochland High School and Dawid Bezuidenhout Secondary School.

Protecting the environment is mainstreamed in the UN’s partnership with the Government, the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) 2019-2023 through the Environment Sustainability Pillar. The Government has also committed to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, **Goals 14 ‘Life Below Water’ and 15 ‘Life on Land’** focus on protecting marine and land ecosystems, halting biodiversity loss and ensuring the sustainable use of marine and terrestrial resources.

To ensure that students participating at the commemoration left with a better understanding of the SDGs, UNDP Programme Specialist, Martha Naanda quizzed the students on SDG related questions and awarded those who answered correctly with SDG-branded bags. Participating schools also received SDG branded bags for use at their schools.



*“At the end of the day, if we do not substantially reduce our plastic waste, there will be severe consequences for biodiversity, human health and food security”.*

**- Rachel Odede, UN Resident Coordinator a.i.**