

World Population Day Commemorated in //Karas

The World Population Day was commemorated at Keetmanshoop in //Karas Region on Friday, 24 July 2015 under the banner of ‘Vulnerable Populations in Emergencies’.

The day is remembered worldwide on the 11-th July annually, to create awareness on various issues affecting humanity. The theme for 2015 is intended to highlight the special needs of women and adolescent girls during conflicts and humanitarian disasters.

This year’s event is celebrated in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, Ministry of Urban and Rural Development and the Namibia Statistics Agency.

Delivering the keynote address, the Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare Bishop Zephania Kameeta noted that women, especially those who are pregnant, children, people with disabilities and the elderly are among the most vulnerable groups in emergencies.

“Sixty percent of the Namibian population live in rural areas, and the majority of this people are children, women, elderly and people living with disabilities. During an emergency material and physical resources are stretched and often those things that the people need are not enough and they are left with nothing,” he said

He stressed that “selfless leadership” remains instrumental to eradicate poverty in the country, adding that the poverty we have in Namibia was largely skewed towards women and youth, “therefore we need to empower them so that they may be freed from poverty and rise to make meaningful contribution to our country.”

The Assistant Representative of the UNFPA office in Namibia, Israel Tjizake, echoing the same sentiments said that in times of humanitarian emergencies – whether caused by natural disasters or conflict- women and girls faced high risk of becoming vulnerable. “They face particular threats as a result of the absence of health and other essential services that they need”.

“Even under normal conditions, reproductive health complications are supposed to be the leading cause of death and illness among women of child-bearing age, he stressed.

“In humanitarian situations, an estimated one in five women and adolescent girls are likely to be pregnant. As skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care often become unavailable, pregnant women and girls’ vulnerability to death and injury is further exacerbated,” he noted further.

“Many women who survive a crisis become heads of household, with the sole responsibility of caring for their children. They often have to overcome immense obstacles to provide health and

care for children, the sick, the injured and the elderly and bear the heaviest burden of relief and reconstruction. As a result, they may neglect their own needs as they care for others,” he said.

The UNFPA works closely with governments, UN agencies, community-based organizations and other partners to ensure that reproductive health is integrated into emergency responses. UNFPA deploys hygiene supplies, obstetric and family planning supplies, trained personnel, and other support to vulnerable populations, and works to ensure the needs of women and young people are served through both an emergency and the reconstruction phase.

The event preceded with a march and concluded with numerous awards to schools that came out on top during the national school debates held over the past four weeks by UNFPA and the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service.