

Youth discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights

21 July, Swakopmund: Young people from the country's 14 regions convened in Swakopmund for the National Youth Conference from 20-21 July 2018. Held under the theme "Young people putting Sexual Reproductive Health Rights knowledge into practice", the Conference provided a space for young people to speak openly about the challenges they face and how to address them.

Speaking at the opening, the Mayor of Swakopmund, Pauline Nashilundo said, "The power of young people to exercise their rights and make correct choices will determine the health and well-being of present and future generations."

Young people in Namibia below the age of 35 make up 66% of the population while those younger than 15 years make up more than 39% of the population. With education and empowerment, young people can be agents of change and progress, as well as use their unique voices to bring about positive change. The Mayor noted that these young people face daily challenges such as unemployment, teenage pregnancy, dropping out of school, inequality and gender-based violence (GBV). She further emphasised the importance of finding innovating ways to address challenges. "Adolescents are diverse and programmes addressing adolescents and young people need to take note of the cultural diversity, differences in age and education levels while responding to their health care needs," she said.

The conference was organised by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) and the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service (MSYNS) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

Other stakeholders involved included the African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN), Star for Life, Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).



Youth engaging in a group discussion at the National Youth Conference. UNFPA