

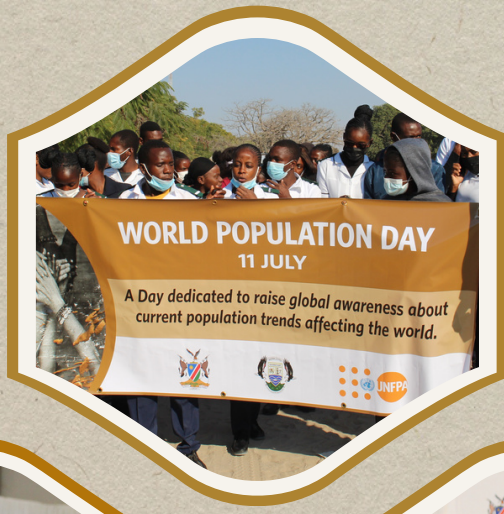


REPORT

WORLD POPULATION DAY (WPD) AND LAUNCH OF 2022 STATE OF WORLD POPULATION (SOWP) REPORT

11 July 2022

Rundu Convention Centre



**WPD THEME: "A WORLD OF 8 BILLION: TOWARDS A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR ALL -
HARNESSING OPPORTUNITIES AND ENSURING RIGHTS AND CHOICES FOR ALL"**
**2022 SOWP THEME: "SEEING THE UNSEEN: THE CASE FOR ACTION IN THE NEGLECTED
CRISIS OF UNINTENDED PREGNANCY"**

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INTRODUCTION

Namibia on 11 July joined the rest of the world in commemorating World Population Day in Rundu, the capital of the Kavango East Region. World Population Day was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989 as a measure to raise awareness on matters related to population, including their link with development and the environment. The Day was first marked on 11 July, and since then, UNFPA country offices have commemorated World Population Day, in partnership with governments and civil society organisations.

Observing World Population Day is important for Namibia, to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the 2030 Global Goals. The commemoration signals to the rest of the world, Namibia's commitment to addressing its population matters such as poverty, gender inequality, health and environmental sustainability, among other concerns.

The theme for this year's World Population Day is: "A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all". The global population is projected to reach eight (8) billion in November this year. This milestone is a moment for celebration in terms of reduced poverty and advancements in health care and a decline in infant and maternal mortality. It is also a moment of reflection, a time for all countries to take stock and drive action, no matter the direction of their population growth.

This year's World Population Day (WPD) was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, National Planning Commission, National Youth Council, Namibia Statistic Agency, Kavango East Regional Council, University of Namibia, civil society organisations, Society for Family Planning (SFH) and Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (Nappa).

The event was held at the Rundu Convention Centre and attended by over 700 people including youth, community members, and dignitaries from the regional and national level, including councillors, traditional authorities, senior government officials, the private sector, and the media. The event was preceded by a march. UNFPA's annual flagship report, the State of World Population Report (SoWP) 2022, was launched during the event, and the United Nations Population Award Individual Laureate was also presented to Hon. Emma Theofelus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology. As part of sensitising community members on the importance of sexual and reproductive health, an intergenerational dialogue was convened on unintended pregnancies in Namibia.

Objectives

- Open up discussion and set the agenda on the linkage between population dynamics and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
- Raise awareness on population dynamics and sexual and reproductive issues
- Solicit the support of decision-makers in investing in SRHR

2022 State of World Population (SoWP)

UNFPA prepares a global report on the State of the World's Population annually to sensitise policymakers, planners, community leaders, and the population at large on priority issues affecting the structure and dynamics of the global population. This year's report is entitled, "Seeing the Unseen: the case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy" and details the steep costs associated with unintended pregnancy – including the cost to a person's health, education, and future; as well as costs to health systems, workforces, and societies.

Handover of UN Population Award Individual Laureate to Hon. Emma Theofelus

Hon Emma was awarded Hon. Theofelus was announced as the winner of the UN Population Award Individual Laureate on 13 June 2022 during a virtual ceremony for her outstanding work advocating for women's empowerment and adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Namibia. The award presented to her consists of a gold medal, a diploma, and a monetary prize of USD12 500.

Intergenerational dialogue on unintended pregnancies

The dialogue enabled adolescents and youth in Kavango East to engage with representatives from key line ministries, civil society organisations, local leaders, and parents. The objective of the dialogue was to raise awareness about the problems they face and seek solutions. Through this, adolescents and youth were able to discuss teenage pregnancies, understand policies that affect them, and exchange ideas on how to prevent teenage pregnancy in Namibia.



**Director of Ceremonies, Mr. Ludwig Thikusho
Chief Regional Officer
Kavango East Regional Council**



**Reverend Magreth Da Roche
delivered opening prayer**

STATEMENTS

Welcome Remarks by Her Worship Johanna Kakondo Deputy Mayor of Rundu Town

Thank you Director of ceremonies for according me the opportunity to give a word of welcome at this key gathering of the commemoration of World Population Day and launch of the State of World Population Report 2022.

Director of ceremonies, first and foremost, on behalf of the Rundu Town Council, the residents and indeed on my own behalf, I would like to give a special word of welcome to Hon. Kalumbi Shangula, the Minister of Health and Social Services and Member of Parliament in the Republic of Namibia for taking time from your busy schedule to come to the town of Rundu, Kavango East Region to officiate the commemoration of World Population Day and launch of State of World Population report 2022

In the same vein, I would like to welcome Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas , Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service and Hon. Emma Theofelus, the Deputy Minister of Information, Communication and Technology for being amongst the delegation to this commemoration. What a blessing is this today to have the highest authority in our midst.

Program Director, I wish to also welcome Hon. Bonifatius Wakudumo the Governor of Kavango East Region for making time to attend this important event. Equally I wish to welcome Hon. Vicky Kauma, Councillor of Rundu Urban Constituency and Vice Chairperson of the National Council and all Honourable Councillors present here today. I also wish to welcome Ms. Sheila Roseau, the Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Namibia and our Respected Traditional Leaders present here today.

The moderator and all speakers of intergenerational dialogues, all distinguished invited Guests, members of the Community and members of the media present here are welcomed.



“Let us stand firm in assisting all the efforts of the government to make this country a better place for everyone.”

Her Worship Johanna Kakondo
Deputy Mayor of Rundu Town

At this juncture I wish to also thank the preparatory committee for choosing Rundu Town of the Kavango East Region as the venue for this important event.

Director of ceremonies, when I looked at the cover page of the program, I noticed the two pictures of beautiful young ladies with long hair crossing each other. The heading in bold says: (seeing the unseen) I am very happy this morning because the issue of teenage pregnancy is topping the agenda of our government and it is also very close to my heart. Today, many of our young girls in the country have become mothers either by unintended pregnancy or other ways. Rundu Town and Kavango East Region in general has no exaptation. So, I believe that the gathering of today will deliberate more on the issue that affects our young girls.

I hope that the launch of the State of World Population report of 2022 and the dialogue that will take place here will make a positive impression on our young girls to determine their future.

Remember that you are the future leaders of our motherland, so let us stand firm in assisting all the efforts of the government to make this country a better place for everyone.

Director of ceremonies, my task was to welcome everyone at this gathering not to deliver a speech. I believe that the main speaker will make a detailed point on the commemoration information. I urge you to listen very attentively to all speakers so that you carry the correct information to those who didn't make it to attend.

With those few words, I therefore once again welcome you all at this gathering. For those of you who travelled from far to come to this event, I welcome you to Rundu and Kavango East Region in general. I wish you a pleasant stay in Rundu and may you travel safely back to your various destinations. I thank you.

Remarks and Introduction of Guest of Honor by Hon. Bonifatius Wakudumo Governor, Kavango East Region

I am very happy that this year's World Population Day is being celebrated in the Kavango East Region.

World Population Day as indicated by the previous speakers seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of Population issues and was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. The Day was first marked on 11 July, since then, UNFPA country offices commemorate World Population Day, in partnership with governments and civil society organisations, exactly that is what we are witnessing today.

The theme for this year's World Population Day is: "A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all". The global population is projected to reach eight (8) billion in November this year.

This milestone is a moment for celebration in terms of reduced poverty and advancements in health care and decline in infant and maternal mortality. It is also a moment of reflection, a time for all countries to take stock and drive action, no matter the direction of their population growth.

On that note let me quote UN Secretary-General António Guterres who said "Reaching a global population of eight billion is a numerical landmark, but our focus must always be on people. In the world we strive to build, 8 billion people means 8 billion opportunities to live dignified and fulfilled lives".

We hope the report we're launching today will help us in our efforts towards creating a just and equitable world for all!

It is now my distinct honour to introduce to you the Keynote Speaker at this event.



“

We hope the report we're launching today will help us in our efforts towards creating a just and equitable world for all!

Hon. Bonifatius Wakudumo
Governor of Kavango East Region

”

Hon. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula was born at Etilyasa, Omusati region, the 3rd among ten siblings.

He has completed his matriculation at Ongwediva High School.

He holds a number of qualifications in the medical field including a Master of Science in medicine and Master in Business Administration.

His experiences range from:

- Chief of Medical Services
- Medical Superintendent
- Regional Health Director
- Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Social Services
- Private Medical Practitioner
- Assistant Pro-Vice Chancellor, UNAM
- Past Chairman of SWAPO Party Think Tank
- Director of Public and Private Companies
- Secretary of SWAPO Party Central Committee and Congresses

And he likes soccer, tennis, boxing and reading.

Please join me in welcoming Hon. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula, Minister of Health and Social Services to address us. I Thank you.

Keynote Remarks by Hon. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula Minister, Ministry of Health and Social Services

I have the honor to be with you at this ceremony today to commemorate the World Population Day; to launch the 2022 State of the World Population Report, and also to witness the handover of the 2022 United Nations Population Individual Laureate Award to our very own Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Honourable Emma Theofelus. I therefore invite you to join me in congratulating her once again on this achievement. This Award should serve as a catalyst to future successes!

In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, a total of 179 countries including Namibia agreed that population and development are inextricably linked, and empowering women and meeting people's needs for education and health, including reproductive health, are necessary for both individual advancement and balanced development. The right of the individual to freely and responsibly decide how many children to have and when to have them has been the guiding principle in sexual and reproductive health, including family planning as adopted by the groundbreaking programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

World Population Day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution and decided to continue observing the Day every year on the 11 July to raise awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human right. Furthermore, the aim of this day is to create awareness about the exploding world population and the importance of reproductive health. This year, World Population Day is being commemorated under the theme: "A world of Eight (8) billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all". The world population is expected to cross the 8 billion mark by the end of 2022 or within the first months of 2023.

The Sustainable Development Goals recognise women's bodily autonomy and gender equality, and the importance of women's ability to make informed decisions about sexual relations, contraceptives and reproductive health care.



Namibia is one of the countries faced with a huge challenge of teenage pregnancy, which may translate into unintended pregnancies.

*Hon. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula
Minister of Health and Social Services*

The use of contraceptives improves health-related outcomes such as reduced unintended pregnancies, high-risk pregnancies, unsafe abortion, maternal mortality, and infant mortality. It also brings improvements in schooling and economic outcomes, especially for girls and women. Beyond the impacts of contraceptive use at the individual level, there are benefits at the population level. From a macroeconomic perspective, reduction in fertility enhances economic growth as a result of increased number of women participating in paid labour.

Continued rapid population growth presents challenges for achieving Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where countries must provide healthcare services, education and eventually employment opportunities for the growing numbers of children and young people. Long-term global population trends are driven largely by trends in fertility. It is, therefore, important to understand the relationship between contraceptive use and fertility, especially in high-fertility contexts, because of the implications for triggering or speeding up the demographic transition, and harnessing a demographic dividend.

According to the 2013 Namibia Demographic and Health Survey, the total fertility rate in Namibia is 3.6 children per woman, a decline from 5.6 reported in 1992. Knowledge of contraception is universal in Namibia, with 99.6% of all women and 99.7% of all men having heard of at least one method. Unmet needs for family planning services were 12% of which 8% are for spacing and 4% are for limiting births. It is therefore opportune to translate the high level of knowledge on contraceptives into practical outcomes.

In Namibia, the importance of family planning as a contributing factor to the improvement of quality of life has been recognised since independence in 1990. The Government is therefore committed to harnessing the health and socio-economic benefits of family planning and meeting the demand for family planning by making the services available, accessible, acceptable, and affordable to all women and men of reproductive ages.

Individuals and couples in Namibia also have the right to determine whether, when, the number, and how often to have children as stipulated in the National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child Health. The Ministry is committed to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care and reproductive rights, including family planning services and information, as agreed at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable

Development. Investments in Sexual and Reproductive Health today is investments in the health and well-being of millions of women, men, girls and boys for generations to come.

In Namibia, family planning services are offered at all public health facilities free of charge. In order to improve access, family planning services must be provided at all clinics, health centers, hospitals casualty departments, outpatient departments and all the wards where female or male patients are admitted and at consulting rooms as part of the Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV Integration services in the health facilities and outreach services.

Pregnancy- and childbirth-related complications are the number-one killers of girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries. In Namibia, contraceptive use among young people aged 15–19 is relatively low at 24%, while teenage pregnancy remains high at 19%. Access to information and contraceptives can therefore, protect young people's lives. The Ministry is urging parents to discuss sexual reproductive issues with children, guide them and advise them on how to overcome the transition period from childhood to adulthood as well as discussing contraceptive use.

Male involvement in family planning and contraceptive services is important. Their attitudes can contribute to the practices of healthy behaviour on matters of reproductive health. Benefits to health and the quality of life are the prevention of unintended pregnancy, reduced risk of maternal mortality, improved health for mothers and children, improved life options for women, easing the burden on schools, reduced pressures on the environment and public services.

This year, the World Population Day is being commemorated jointly with the launching of the State of the World Population Report. The 2022 State of the World Population Report titled: Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy, amplifies the latest evidence on unintended pregnancy and its impact on women, girls, households, societies, countries, and global development.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services will continue to ensure that contraceptives are accessible, affordable, and available in a wide range of forms acceptable to consumers. The Government and stakeholders will continue to invest in research to better understand the cause and consequences of unintended pregnancy and to spearhead contraceptive technologies that reduces side effects, allay women's anxieties over them, and broaden the options available for men.

The State of the World Report for 2022, has indicated that an estimated 121 million pregnancies per year take place in the bodies of women who did not choose pregnancy or motherhood, were not planning to have a child at that time, with that partner, and in those circumstances. Namibia is one of the countries faced with a huge challenge of teenage pregnancy, which may translate into unintended pregnancies. According to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture close to 3 out of 10 girls in Namibia drop out of school due to teenage pregnancies. In 2019 alone, 1 542 girls dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy, representing 23.3% of all recorded dropout cases of girls in the country. The highly affected regions were Oshana, Oshana-Namaland, and Kunene representing 20.2%, 15.0% and 12.5% respectively. We have spoken enough. Now it is time for action because the scale of the problem demands concrete actions from every Namibian citizen, as the government alone cannot resolve this challenge.

We have just emerged from the Fifth Wave of Covid-19 pandemic. Although the numbers of cases are fewer at the present moment, the risk of contracting the infection is still significant. As we are gradually moving from containment of infection to mitigation, it becomes imperative that we fortify our defence by means of vaccination. Kunene has not done well in terms of vaccination coverage. I reiterate our call to the inhabitant of this region to take up vaccination and return to a normal life we use to enjoy before the outbreak of Covid-19.

I register my appreciation to the United Nations Agencies in Namibia and all other stakeholders, for their continuous technical and financial support towards the implementation of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights activities. Your contribution towards the wellbeing of our adolescents and young people and the general population is of most importance to the socio-economic development of our country and the world at large. Allow me also to commend the Kunene Region, for demonstrating remarkable leadership through the Honourable Governor's office and other line Ministries for their commitment in planning and hosting this year's World Population Day commemoration.

I implore everybody to join efforts in the fight against inequalities, gender discrimination, gender-based violence, and promote universal health care for our citizens. It is now my distinct honour to officiate the launch of the State of the World Population Report for 2022 at the country level!

Remarks (video) by Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Director a.i.

It is my pleasure to join you virtually on this World Population Day – A day set aside to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.

It is thus fitting that Namibia is using this opportunity to launch the State of the World Population report 2022, entitled ‘Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy’.

This report brings to the fore the plight of individuals – women and girls who are unable to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, and regrettably lack bodily autonomy.

Unintended pregnancies have significant and broad ramifications for individuals, families and societies. They have serious personal repercussions for the women and girls affected, including on their education, well-being and health – as many resort to unsafe abortions.

Close to half of all pregnancies in the world are unintended – amounting to 121 million pregnancies every year. For the women and girls affected, whether or not to become pregnant, is no choice at all.

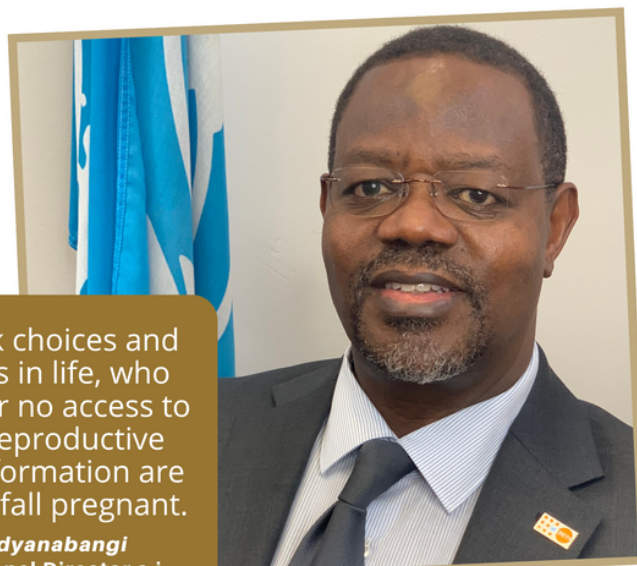
In East and Southern Africa, the most recent data show that close to half of the women (48%) lack the power to make decisions on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights – when to seek reproductive health care, when to have sex and when and if to use contraception.

Girls who lack choices and opportunities in life, or who have limited or no access to sexual and reproductive health care and information, are more likely to become pregnant. Girls forced into child marriage – a violation of their human rights – are also more likely to become pregnant.

The data from Namibia shows us that more teenage pregnancies are reported in rural areas in regions such as Oshana, Oshana-Namaland and Kunene. Close to 3 out of 10 girls in Namibia drop out of school due to teenage pregnancies.

“Girls who lack choices and opportunities in life, who have limited or no access to sexual and reproductive health and information are more likely to fall pregnant.

Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi
UNFPA ESA Regional Director a.i.



Hosting this launch event in Kavango East gives an opportunity for all partners to assess the situation on the ground and pursue solutions to these challenges. Indeed, we cannot proffer solutions without engaging those that affected including those left furthest behind.

In the spirit of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the ambitions of the Decade of Action toward the 2030 Sustainable Goals, UNFPA works to prevent unintended pregnancy.

UNFPA is present in more than 150 countries globally, including in Namibia, to support access to and demand for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care and services from a life-course approach; recognising that people have different and changing needs throughout their lives and at different stages of their sexual and reproductive lives.

Unintended pregnancy has been an invisible crisis for far too long. UNFPA calls on policy makers and community leaders to work to prioritise urgent action to address unintended and adolescent pregnancy. It is time for us to “See the Unseen”.

- The voices and needs of women and girls must shape our responses to the crisis of unintended pregnancies. Partnerships with women’s organisations can allow for more collaborative approaches in formulating policies.
- We must prioritise investment in research and evidence to better understand the drivers and impacts of unintended pregnancy and to ensure people (women AND men) have access to contraceptives of their choice.
- Health systems - including those in humanitarian settings - must provide holistic reproductive health services that are stigma-free and supportive of bodily autonomy.
- Leaders must ensure gender equality in all areas of policy-making, including breaking down barriers to women completing their education and entering the workforce, and supporting innovative social support programmes.
- Finally, we ALL – from Governments to individuals – need to fully appreciate the repercussions of leaving women and girls behind. This means convincing family members, the media, religious leaders and partners to value women and girls beyond – and inclusive of – motherhood. Women and girls themselves must insist upon their equal value, and demand recognition at every turn, from the home to the clinic to the halls of their country’s capital building.

These efforts will bring us closer to our professed shared vision for humanity: a world in which every pregnancy is wanted, and every person enjoys the full realisation of their rights and potential. Thank you.

**WPD Statement by UN Secretary-General, António Guterres
delivered by Ms. Sheila Roseau, UNFPA Namibia Representative,
on behalf of the UN System in Namibia**

This year's World Population Day falls during a milestone year, when we anticipate the birth of the Earth's eight billionth inhabitants.

This is an occasion to celebrate our diversity, recognise our common humanity, and marvel at advancements in health that have extended lifespans and dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates.

At the same time, it is a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for our planet and a moment to reflect on where we still fall short of our commitments to one another.

Amidst COVID-19, the climate crisis, wars and conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, hunger and poverty, our world is in peril. We still live in a world of vast gender inequality – and we are witnessing renewed assaults on women's rights, including on essential health services. Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth are still the leading cause of death among girls aged 15 to 19.

Reaching a global population of eight billion is a numerical landmark, but our focus must always be on people. In the world we strive to build, 8 billion people means 8 billion opportunities to live dignified and fulfilled lives.

When we act on our shared values, we contribute to our common future. When we act on our shared values, we contribute to our common future.

Let us work together towards greater equality and solidarity to ensure that our planet can support our needs and those of future generations.

Let us protect human rights and the ability of all individuals to make informed choices about whether and when to have children.

And let us renew our promise to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for a sustainable and inclusive future for all eight billion of us, leaving no one behind.



This is an occasion to celebrate our diversity, recognise our common humanity, and marvel at advancements in health that have extended lifespans and dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates

Ms. Sheila Roseau
UNFPA Namibia Representative

**Statement by the United Nations Population Award Individual Laureate
Hon. Emma Theofelus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology**

I would like to thank the Committee for the United Nations Population Award for bestowing on me this great honour, the most prestigious population award in the world – the United Nations Population Award in the Individual Category.

I'd also like to thank my family for being a powerful support system and this extends to my UNFPA family. When I joined AfriYAN (African Youth and Adolescents Network) as an adolescent, I knew that I wanted to help build a Namibia and to some extent, an Africa that was more responsive to issues affecting adolescents and youth. The realities of teenage pregnancy from the time I was in primary school were too real for me to ignore. Watching girls who looked just like, had the same background as me leaving school to have their babies, coming back to school but leaving again, but for good this time because the stigma they faced every day as teenage mothers were too much to bare. I knew that that could have easily been me. It is not right that we don't capacitate young people with enough information about their sexual lives so that they may have options and the ability to make smarter decisions about their lives.

Population issues should concern all of us. It is estimated that the world population will hit 8 billion people by this year. That means 8 billion lives that should lead healthy lives, 8 billion people that should have extended life spans, a world where there is reduced maternal mortality and child mortality, and 8 billion lives that should live in a world that has equitable access to medicines and gender equality. I would also like to thank Dr. Hage G. Geingob for appointing me to be a Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister in the Republic of Namibia. It is through the exercise of his authority and will that I was able to table a motion on 09th May 2021, asking for the complete removal of tax and/or partial reduction of tax on all sanitary pads in an effort to make them more affordable to the Namibian girl and woman. To date, Namibia has begun the process to do just that. The removal of the tax on all sanitary pads will become a reality in Namibia and is the first step in my opinion towards making all sanitary products free in the near future.

Therefore ladies and gentlemen, I cannot fully express to you how much I am honoured to receive the UN Population Award.



“ This award is not mine alone. It is Namibia's award because we are an exemplary country in leading a gradually gender equal nation.

Hon. Emma Theofelus, Deputy Minister, MICT



According to a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) report, 1 in 10 African girls misses 5-6 school days due to their period. This puts an unequal and unfair burden on the girl child and exposes them to many other societal risks by staying out of school. The reality is not far for out-of-school girl children due to various reasons or even young women. No matter the age, background, race, or faith, this affects all Namibian women and the playing field needs to be levelled.

It is therefore my conviction and my pledge, that I will redouble my efforts and collaborate with others in ensuring that period poverty is one day eradicated and that I play a pivotal role in addressing larger population matters such as sexual and gender-based violence, child marriages and teenage pregnancy as I have already been doing.

I wish to dedicate this award to the people of Namibia, especially the young women and girls who continue to break barriers and hold their own in a world that does not put them first. This award is not mine alone. It is Namibia's award because we are an exemplary country in leading a gradually gender-equal nation.

I am honoured to accept this award and I once again thank the Committee, UNFPA and Namibia in extension for bestowing on me this prestigious honour. I thank you.

Statement by Cynthia Paulo, teenage pregnancy victim

I remember in 2017 when I met this guy. He was tall, quite bold and he said all the beautiful things that I wanted to hear. And in 2018, we started dating. I mean... I was in love! Until all hell broke loose. In 2019, I fell pregnant. And I was only 17 years old. So what was I going to do now?

Director of ceremonies, distinguished guests. Allow me to stand on the already established protocol. My name is Cynthia Paulo and I have a story to tell. Because I am a victim of teenage pregnancy.

Kavango region is among the regions with high rates of teenage pregnancies. But until we end the norm that talking about sexual matters is a taboo, We will continue to watch it rise endlessly. I am a victim of teenage pregnancy. But I'm young, so I will find fault in my elders so senselessly. Because actually...

When I was in high school, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture did not put up serious life skills teachers that would confidently educate me on sexual matters. But does that even matter?

Because as a Namibian, I am a Christian. But who could I run to if my church elders are too stunned to talk about sexual reproductive health. But maybe my life would've been better if they directed me on how to develop healthy relations for myself.

I need to mention that I am a 3rd year student, doing my honours degree in nursing at the university. Because when I was working at Nkarapawe clinic, I came across a 16-year-old girl that was facing adversity. She came to the clinic in hopes of beginning family planning. And I am assuming that she had knowledge on different contraceptive methods to use because, she specifically opted for the two-month injection. But let I tell you, that! was the devil's rejection.



Get your education before
bringing a new life!

Cynthia Paulo
victim of teenage pregnancy

We didn't have any.
And so this young girl had no choice but
to walk back home, whilst my elders in
power sit on their thrones.
Because as a ministry of health, we are
failing to keep these contraceptives in
stock.
So we will continue to fall pregnant,
while people just laugh and mock. So
let's talk!
Did that young girl fall pregnant? I don't
know.
But maybe if we sit down and count the
numbers, statistics will show
How the ministry is so slow!

But hold on.
Enough pointing fingers.
We all know how this news lingers.
I chose to have sex without using a
condom.
And where did I think that would take
me? To London?

Now I'm worried about having this
baby.
Leaving my childhood to become a
young lady? Or maybe!
I could boil newspapers and drink the
chemicals of it.
Or perhaps drink concentrated juice to
get rid of it? I believe in it!
Ugg, how silly of me seriously.
Trying to make a serious decision on my
own so ridiculously?
So as a community.
I'm talking parents, I'm talking leaders till
infinity.
We should work with one another.
Spread out afar in the villages and
motivate one another.

And as ministries.
I'm talking stakeholders.
We should work together and try to form
a back holder.
To ensure proper sexuality in schools
and most importantly...
the availability of contraceptives at
clinics and in village campaigns.

But because I am a victim of teenage
pregnancy.
My story doesn't have to end.
I still have a lot to unfold and to mend.
Because my story didn't end. So my
friend!
My name is Cynthia Paulo and I am a
victim of teenage pregnancy.
I have a 2-year-old son that is growing
so miraculously.
And so I stand here to tell you so
confidently.
That I am a 3rd year student doing my
honours degree at the university.
And my future doesn't hold any adversity.

But my dear friends.
If you are still young and are holding
your life so tenderly.
Please uphold your dignity! Because I
don't want you to walk in my shoes.
And that's why I'm right here trying to
encourage you
As I stand here to give advice.
I'd say "get your education before
bringing a new life".
Have safe sex and do it right.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

In concluding the dialogue, Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas, the Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service indicated that a lot of progress have been made in adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights including the establishment of the Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy, which makes provision for pregnant girls to go back to school after one year's absence. Despite the progress, more still need to be done. The role and impact of social and cultural factors on teenage pregnancy cannot go unnoticed. She highlighted that these could impede the formulation of resolute efforts toward addressing the problem of teenage pregnancy. To continue improving the progress made, strengthening partnerships remains a priority to facilitate joint advocacy efforts to counteract the high teenage pregnancy rates in the country.



“ Parental involvement is necessary in the prevention of teenage pregnancy. ”

Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas, Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adolescent and youth-friendly services should be accessible and available to all and should offer a variety of contraceptive methods. The limited choice and availability of contraceptive methods were noted with concerns.
- Need for quality Life Skills-based HIV and Health Education.
- Parental involvement is key to preventing teen pregnancy: parents should talk to their children about sexual relationships, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and contraceptives, as well as becoming advocates for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights issues in their families and communities.

SCENES FROM WPD 2022

UN Population Award Handover



Intergenerational Dialogue



“The youth are calling on government and all stakeholders to reach the most marginalised youth, listen to them and help them with the fight against teenage pregnancies and poverty.”

Rivaldo Kavanga



2022 State of World Population Report launch



From Left, Hon. Damian Maghambayi , Chairperson of Kavango East Regional Council; Ms. Sheila Roseau, UNFPA Namibia Representative; Hon. Bonifatius Wakudumo, Governor of Kavango East Region; Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Kalumbi Shangula , Hon. Emma Theofelus, Deputy Minister of Information, Communication and Technology; Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas, Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service; and Her Worship Johanna Kakondo. Deputy Mayor of Rundu Town.

World Population Day March



Mobile Sexual & Reproductive Health services & #Condomise campaign



More event photos





