



WELCOMING REMARKS

DR. TJAMA TJIVIKUA

RECTOR OF THE POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

THE FAMILY PLANNING & UNSAFE ABORTIONS AWARENESS DAY 2010

WEDNESDAY, 08 SEPTEMBER 2010

AUDITORIUM 1

Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Thaddeus Shigwedha

Mr. Fabian Byomuhangi, UNFPA Country Representative

Dr. Pandu Hailonga, *UNFPA*

Mr. Sam Ntelamo, *NAPPA Country Programme Director*

Mrs. Denise Moongo, *NAPPA Programme Coordinator*

Ms. Beauty Kwenda, *NAPPA*

Esteemed Polytechnic Faculty, Staff and Students

Distinguished and Invited Members of the Public

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, let me warmly welcome the UNFPA Country Representative, Mr. Fabian Byomuhangi, here at the Polytechnic of Namibia. You are a vibrant and dedicated leader, a pro-active voice in development. Surely this also speaks to the dedication of UNFPA, an organization dedicated to socio-economic development internationally.

Let me also welcome the NAPPA Country Program director, Mr. Sam Ntelamo and his organization. Today NAPPA helps us to address issues of family planning and unsafe abortions and this day is dedicated to raising awareness, especially amongst our students. We appreciate that initiative.

Raising a child requires a significant amount of resources in terms of time, social and financial considerations. And surely each parent wants his or her child to have the best benefits and opportunities in life, and thus to be successful. Planning can help assure that resources are available.

According to research done by UNFPA, at least 200 million women want to use safe and effective family planning methods, but are unable to do so because they lack access to information and services or the support of their husbands and communities.

And more than 50 million of the 190 million women who become pregnant each year have abortions.

Abortion is a sensitive and contentious issue with moral religious, cultural, social and political dimensions. It is also a public health concern, but unfortunately more than one-quarter of the world's people lives in countries where abortion is prohibited or permitted only to save the woman's life. Yet, regardless of legal status in any country, abortions still occur, and nearly half of these are performed by an unskilled practitioner or in less than sanitary conditions, or both.

Abortions performed under unsafe conditions claim the lives of tens of thousands of women around the world every year, leave many times that number with chronic and often irreversible health problems, and drain the resources of public health systems. And surely, the pregnancies never produce the lives conceived, whether intended or not. Often, however, controversy overshadows the public health impact.

The need for voluntary family planning is growing fast, with it is the estimated 'unmet need' of growing by 40 per cent during the next 15 years.

It is against this background that the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association in conjunction with the Polytechnic of Namibia initiated a Family Planning and Unsafe Abortions Awareness Day on campus. The objectives of this day are to increase the public awareness on the availability of free family planning tools in the country; to raise awareness on complications related to baby dumping, unsafe abortions and other abortion related issues in Namibia; and to hold a discussion forum with policy makers and other influential people in the country.

I would also like to emphasize that at the Polytechnic there is support and counseling available to all students who find themselves pregnant. You can, and must, continue with your studies, classes and examinations as usual. There is support available from the clinic as well as from our social worker to discuss the best options available to each individual student who might find herself in such a situation. You do not need to abandon your studies or feel that this is the end of your career. Success in your career, to a great extent, predetermines or defines your child's success.

Finally, allow me to express our heartfelt thanks to all our partners in education and health for the support they have provided and continue to provide to us. Our special thanks go to UNICEF, WHO and all other sponsors as well as the management, staff and students of the Polytechnic of Namibia.

I welcome you all and thank you very much for your attention.

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