



Republic of Namibia

Ministry of Gender Equality,
Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare

BEIJING+30: NAMIBIA COUNTRY REPORT 2020-2024

World Conference on Women and Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly

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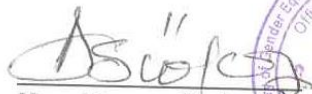
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FOREWORD

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are key development priority areas for the Government of the Republic of Namibia since independence in 1990. The Government takes delight in putting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) into practice. The BPfA has been domesticated by the Republic of Namibia through the National Gender Policy of 1997 and its Plan of Action, with 10 critical areas of focus which were in line with the BPfA.

As a nation, Namibia is honored to be part of the international community that provides updates on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and the country's contribution towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The assessment of Namibia revealed the progress made to promote gender equality and women empowerment during the past five years of the BPfA implementation. Despite these successes, this Report provides identified gaps, challenges and setbacks which the Government will examine and address in order to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It further specifies lessons learnt as well as future priorities for the next five years.



Hon. Doreen Sioka

Minister of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare



PREFACE

Namibia is pleased to present its sixth country report, which covers the years 2020-2024. Namibia is dedicated to report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). The BPfA's focus areas on gender equality and women empowerment were implemented by the National Gender Machinery in collaboration with all stakeholder.

This report highlights the progress made during the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly focusing on the achievements, challenges and setbacks, measures to address the needs of women and girls, Persons with Disabilities as well as marginalized communities. It also identifies good practices, lessons learned for the period (2020-2024) and areas of future support. The report focuses on the progress made in various areas, including women's participation in politics and decision-making, girls' education, the reduction in the prevalence rate of HIV, the prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission and social protection.

The Namibian government is grateful for the support from development partners and the contributions made by various stakeholders in the implementation of BPfA.


Mr. Manasse Nichlas Mbingeneeko
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare would like to acknowledge the country's political leadership for dedicating resources to various key sectors and specifically to the National Gender Machinery in order to ensure progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Ministry would also like to thank stakeholders both from Government institutions, Academia, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society who served in the inter-ministerial Committee. Your inputs are highly appreciated and have been incorporated in the report to the best of our ability. It is also important to recognize the support from development partners including the United Nations system towards gender equality and women empowerment. Last but not least, special gratitude should be afforded to the Ministerial drafting team who played a pivotal role and worked tirelessly to collect information and draft the report until its conclusion.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Affirmative Action Act
AFHS	Adolescent Friendly Health Services
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-deficiency Virus
ANC	Antenatal Care
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
AU	African Union
BIPA	Business and Intellectual Property Authority
BPfA	Beijing Plan of Action
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDC	Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRO	Chief Regional Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FY	Financial Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GBVPU	Gender-Based Violence Protection Units
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GIMAC	Gender Is My Agenda Campaign
GIPF	Government Institutions Pension Fund
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HPP	Harambee Prosperity Plan II

ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IECD	Integrated Early Childhood Development
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IGAs	Income Generating Activities
ITECH	International Training & Education Centre for Health
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
MPs	Members of Parliament
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHHM	Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management
MAWLR	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
MoFPE	Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MHETI	Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation
MICT	Ministry of Information Communication and Technology
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MGEPEWSW	Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCLAS	Namibian Communal Land Administration System
NDP	National Development Plan
NCRST	Namibia Commission on Research Science and Technology
NFIS	Namibia Financial Inclusion Survey
NAMPHIA	Namibia Population-based HIV Impact Assessment
NSFAF	Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund
NWSSP	Namibia Water Sector Support Programme
NDF	Namibian Defense Force
NICW	National Innovation Challenge for Women
NMO	National Mathematics Olympiad
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NCS	Namibia Correctional Services

NPC	National Planning Commission
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
NTA	Namibia Training Authority
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
NWSSP	Namibia Water Sector Support Programme
NYCS	Namibian Youth Credit Scheme
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PEPFAR	U.S President Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SID	Safer Internet Day
SPAs	Strategic Priority Areas
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNAM	University of Namibia
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Namibia is one of the countries that has acceded to and is committed to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, Persons with Disabilities and Marginalized Communities. Namibia has submitted five reports on the implementation of BPfA (Beijing + 5, Beijing +10, Beijing +15, Beijing +20, and Beijing +25 (2014-2019). This report is for the period 2020-2024.

Leading to the development of the country review report, the Ministry of Gender Equality Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare is the National Gender machinery that facilitated and coordinated the drafting of the country report.

The review process was informed by key national reports and surveys which includes African Union Solemn Declaration reports (2020-2023), Sixth Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) country reports and its concluding observations, Annual reports, Education Information Management System (EIMS) report, Health Information Management System (HIMS) reports and the Preliminary report of the 2023 Population Census. The report was validated by the inter-ministerial and National Consultation Committees before approval.

The report is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development under SDG 5. The objective was to assess progress Namibia made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action for the period of 2020-2024 and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly focusing on the achievements, challenges and setbacks, measures to address the needs of women and girls from marginalized communities, good practices, lessons learned and areas of future support.

SECTION ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

1. Introduction

This section covers the country's review process, progress, challenges and setbacks in the implementation of the BPfA as well as factors that influenced the success or failure of the progress across critical areas. It further provides measures taken by the Government to address specific needs for women and girls from marginalized communities. The report provides lessons learned and areas where the country would need additional support.

1.1. Country level review process

The review process was informed by key national reports and surveys which includes African Union Solemn Declaration Reports (2020-2023), Sixth CEDAW Country reports and its concluding observations, Labour Force Surveys, and the Preliminary report of the 2023 Population Census. The report was validated by the inter-ministerial and National Consultation Committees before approval.

As part of the methodology, Namibia undertook a comprehensive national-level process of review towards the production of the country report in collaboration with all branches of Government, civil society organisations, private sector, entities of the United Nations system through the Gender Theme Group (GTG), academia, and the media. An inter-ministerial committee, as well as a national consultative committee, were additionally constituted to analyse official documents, published reports, and research findings, information which was collected and collated towards the country report.

1.2. Key Achievements

During the period under review, the following progress has been made:

- (i) Namibia has closed at least 80.2 percent of its gender gap. The Country is number 8 on the global gender gap index while in Sub-Saharan Africa, is now ranking number 1. These improvements were in the areas of: Education; Economic Participation and Opportunity; Political Empowerment; and Health. Namibia has achieved full parity on both the Health and Survival and Educational Attainment sub-indexes¹;
- (ii) Namibia also achieved 56.0 percent of technical workers and 43.6 percent of senior officers being women. Women's Economic Participation and Opportunity is at 78.4 percent parity and is ranked 19th globally. In addition, Namibia has achieved 44.3 percent parity in Political Empowerment with 44.2 percent female parliamentarians, 31.6 percent female ministers. Currently Namibia has a female Vice President, and a female Prime Minister²;
- (iii) Namibia is continuing with the implementation of the free Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). The implementation of the Universal Primary Education has led to an increase in the number of learners attending primary school from 545 075 in 2018 to 595 897 in 2022; and Secondary enrolment has increased 210 868 to 221 630 secondary

¹ 2023 Global Gender Gap Index

² 2023 Global Gender Gap Index

learners in 2022³. During the tabling of the 2021/2022 financial year budget, the Government abrogated value-added tax on sanitary pads.

- (iv) The Namibian government continues to expand ART services to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV which stands at 91.0 percent coverage. Namibia has reduced its adult HIV incidence rate by 50.0 percent in the past five years. Namibia has also exceeded the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets among women and, nationally, attaining 86-96-91 among adults. Namibia accomplished this through the strategic expansion of HIV prevention and treatment services, with a focus on viral load suppression an individual and community level, and the swift implementation of forward-leading HIV policies. NAMPHIA results also suggest that women ages 15-24 still have a far higher HIV incidence rate (0.99%) than same-aged young men (0.03%). This highlights the continued need for expanded primary HIV prevention in young women, including through the PEPFAR-led DREAMS Partnership, and ensuring all men 25-35 are virally suppressed through the new MenStar Coalition.⁴
- (v) Namibia finalised the development and started with the implementation of the Social Protection Policy 2021 - 2030 which is efficient and effective in addressing risks and vulnerabilities faced by all Namibians across the life cycle to reduce poverty and inequalities, improve the livelihoods of the people, particularly women, poor and vulnerable. The objectives are to: increase coverage and access to social protection services by all Namibians; coordinate and integrate mechanisms to strengthen and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection interventions; enhance the institutional framework for the delivery of social protection; improve government's ability to respond to sudden/severe shocks that may affect many households simultaneously and food security; and improve the monitoring and evaluation of social protection.
- (vi) Namibia has amended and promulgated legislations to address Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence against Children. These include the Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022) and Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022). Government continues to implement the National campaign on GBV and Violence against Children (VAC) through the implementation of the prioritised National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence (2019-2023) and the National Training Manual and Resource Kit on GBV. The focus is to put survivors first and stimulate a culture of care amongst families, communities and institutions which promotes early help-seeking to prevent or limit harm. The government continues to raise awareness on GBV prevention and response to targeting community members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders.
- (vii) Namibia continues to implement programmes targeting marginalised Communities and persons with disabilities. These include Educational Support Programmes, Special Feeding Programmes, Individual Support Programmes and Burial Support Programmes.

1.3. Key Challenges

Amongst the challenges highlighted, are:

- i. The non-legislated quota of the 50.0 percent target risks regression after elections, as political parties are not obliged by the Electoral Act, 2014 (Act No. 5 of 2014) to field equal numbers of men and women as candidates;

³ EMIS 2022.

⁴ Ministry of Health and Social Services.

- ii. While there has been an increase of female enrolment from primary, secondary, higher education and TVET, there has been a decrease in enrollment and completion for males;
- iii. Limited availability of sex-disaggregated data to inform programming;
- iv. High teenage pregnancy rate and child marriage;
- v. The HIV prevalence rate is still high among females with 15.7 percent while it stands at 12.6 percent among males.
- vi. Gender-Based Violence and Violence Against Children;
- vii. Low participation of women in formal economic activities;
- viii. Unemployment and poverty rate among women still high especially among the youth;
- ix. Women still have limited access to productive resources especially land;

1.4. Future Priorities

The top five priorities for the next five years have been identified in the revised National Gender Equality and Equity Policy.

These include:

- (i) Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the revised National Gender Equality and Equity Policy;
- (ii) Gender Based Violence and Violence Against Children;
- (iii) Strengthen Programmes on Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting, Marginalised Communities and Persons with Disabilities;
- (iv) Promotion of quality healthcare including mental health and psycho-social support, sexual reproductive health and rights for women and men with special focus on Maternal Health and HIV/AIDS;
- (v) Gender, Environment and Climate Change;
- (vi) Gender Responsive Data and Statistics.

SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

1. Introduction

This section focuses on micro priorities of the BPfA. The section highlights key achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, women with disabilities and marginalised communities over the past five years. In addition, emerging future priorities are presented.

1.1.1 Women in Politics and Decision-Making Positions

Women representation and participation in Politics and Decision Making is one of the key priorities of the Government of the Republic of Namibia. Namibia ratified the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which targets 50.0 percent gender representation at all levels, as well as the AU gender parity principle globally in line with the UN Sustainable Goal 5 (SDG-5) on Gender Equality.

During the period under review, Namibia closed its Gender Gap standing at 80.2 percent. The Country is number 8 on the global gender index while in Sub-Saharan Africa, is now ranked number 1. These improvements are in the areas of Education; Economic Participation and Opportunity; Political Empowerment; and Health. Namibia has achieved full parity on both the Health and Survival and Educational Attainment sub-indexes⁵. Namibia also achieved 56.0 percent of technical workers and 43.6 percent of senior officers being women. Women's Economic Participation and Opportunity is at 78.4 percent parity and is ranked 19th globally. Namibia has achieved 44.3 percent parity in Political Empowerment with 40.4 percent female parliamentarians in both Houses, 43.2 percent female ministers. Currently, Namibia has a female Vice President and a female Prime Minister⁶.

1.1.2 Universal Primary and Secondary Education

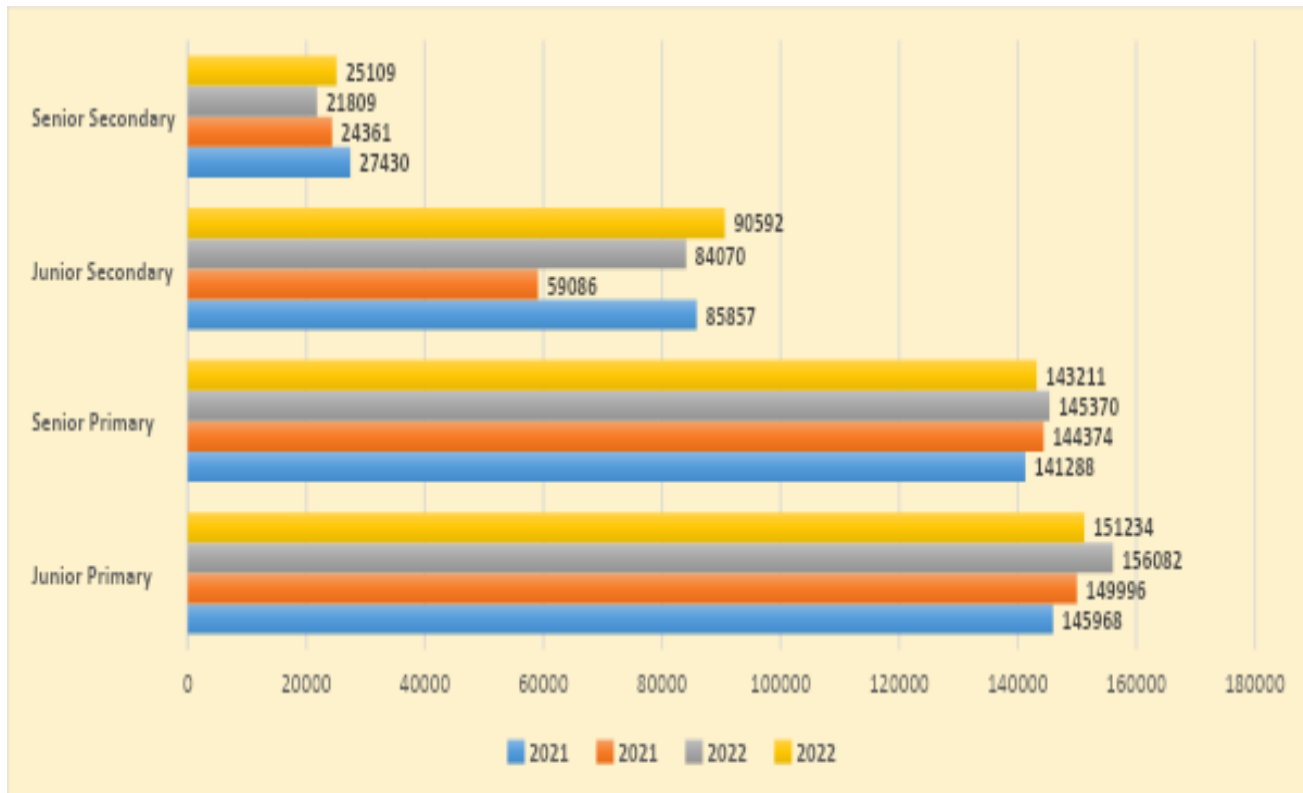
During the period under review, Namibia continued with the implementation of the free Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education. The implementation of Universal Primary Education has led to an increase in the number of learners attending primary school from 545 075 in 2018 to 595 897 in 2022; and Secondary enrolment has increased 210 868 to 221 630 secondary learners in 2022. EMIS, 2022⁷. In addition, Namibia experienced increased enrolment rates at primary and secondary level with a growth rate of 2.9 percent for both male and female during the period under review. During the tabling of the 2021/2022 financial year budget, the Namibian government abrogated value-added tax on sanitary pads.

⁵ 2023 Global Gender Gap Index

⁶ 2023 Global Gender Gap Index

⁷ EMIS, 2022

Figure 1: Male and Female Enrollment in Junior primary school through to grade 12.



Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS) 2021-2022

1.1.3 Improvement of Enrollment Rate for Female in Higher Education

There are more female students enrolled and graduating at institutions of higher learning in Namibia. Enrolment distribution by both public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEI) by sex from 2019-2022, shows that enrolment for males increased from 33.3 percent in 2019 to 36.1 percent in 2022. This is in contrast to females who decreased from 66.7 Percent in 2019 to 63.9 percent in 2022 with an average decrease of 2.80 percent annually. For 2022, 32.4 male and 25.0 female were enrolled in the STEM field while in non-STEM fields, there are more females with 75.0 percent than males with 67.60 percent. However, the number of females in the “engineering field” ranges from 1.7 percent on average and males 7.3 percent. Thi indicates that a gender gap of 5.6 percent exists.

Data also shows that there is a gender gap of 6.8 percent in physics, mathematics and computer studies, whereby female enrollment stands at 3.6 percent compared to 10.4 percent for males. Furthermore, in non-STEM fields the, gender gap is still evident as it shows that there are more male enrolments of 22.6 percent and 18.7 percent for females.

Table 1: Enrollment of Female and Male students in Higher Education

Statistics on enrolments in numbers					Statistics on Enrolment in Per cent			
Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	22,110	22,715	23,918	25,901	33.3	34.1	34.7	36.1
Female	44,318	43,941	45,014	45,919	66.7	65.9	65.3	63.9
Grand Total	66,428	66,656	68,932	71,820	100.0%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2: Female and Male Higher Education Completion rate

Statistics on completion in numbers					Statistics on completion in Percent			
Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	3,663	3,683	2,896	3,851	31.8	28.7	28.7	31.7
Female	7,865	9,129	7,212	8,289	68.2	71.3	71.3	68.3
Grand Total	11,528	12,812	10,108	12,140	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 3: Enrollment by STEM and No-STEM NQF Fields of learning, 2022

Qualification Field of Learning	Number			Per Cent		
	Sex		Total	Sex		Total %
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Agriculture and Nature Conservation	807	836	1,643	3.1	1.8	2.3
Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology	1,898	773	2,671	7.3	1.7	3.7
Health Science and Social Services	2,429	7,825	10,254	9.4	17.0	14.3
Physical, Mathematical and Computer Sciences	2,690	1,650	4,340	10.4	3.6	6.0
Physical Planning and Construction	568	418	986	2.2	0.9	1.4
Total STEM Fields	8,392	11,502	19,894	32.4	25.0	27.7
Business, Commerce and Management	5,855	8,603	14,458	22.6	18.7	20.1
Communication Studies and Languages	792	1,526	2,318	3.1	3.3	3.2
Culture and the Arts	260	618	878	1.0	1.3	1.2
Education, Training and Development	8,944	21,614	30,558	34.5	47.1	42.5
Human and Social Studies	228	569	797	0.9	1.2	1.1
Law, Military Science and Security	1,301	1,249	2,550	5.0	2.7	3.6
Services and Life Sciences	129	238	367	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Non-STEM Fields	17,509	34,417	51,926	67.6	75.0	72.3
Total	25,901	45,919	71,820	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Technology and Innovation 2024

1.1.4. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is seen as a source of skills, knowledge and technology needed to drive the productivity and economic transformation. It is thus receiving renewed attention and its on the Government priority for education and national development agendas. TVET is needed to drive productivity and economic transformation. According to the Namibia Labour force survey (NSA, 2018), youth unemployed in Namibia among age groups 15-34 years stands at 46.1 percent, which is very high. There is thus a need to look into TVET as an option to create employment.

There is vast empirical evidence that advocates for TVET as a potential solution for social and economic issues affecting societies, particularly youth unemployment. The Government scaled up TVET programmes to drive productivity and economic transformation and as an option for employment creation. Efforts in this regard are aligned with the National TVET Policy (Cabinet Decision Number 4th/23.03.21/005) which was implemented in March 2021. The National TVET Policy serves as a cornerstone initiative and embodies the dedication of the Ministry of Higher Education Training and Innovation in fostering a skilled and inclusive workforce. Moreover, every TVET centre has counsellors to conduct one on one counselling sessions and create awareness on related issues faced by trainees on a daily basis.

Statistics show that in regards to enrollments in TVET, males still continue to dominate from 2019 (18273 males and 13233 females) to 2023 (14330 males and 9540 females). However, it is evident that more females are graduating from the TVET system as opposed to males. The statistics in 2019 showed 6929 males graduates vs 8135 females, while in 2022, there were more males (5079) who graduated and (4055) females.

Table 4: Statistic on enrolment and completion in TVET by sex 2019-2023

YEAR	ENROLMENT			GRADUATES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2019	18273	13233	31506	6929	8135	15064
2020	18507	16413	34920	2368	2465	4833
2021	8513	8227	16740	5079	4055	9134
2022	13825	9587	23412	2198	2356	4554
2023	14330	9540	23870			

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Technology and Innovation 2024

1.1.4. Women’s Access to Land

The Namibian government continues to implement the **communal land registration programme**, which involves the registration of Communal Land Rights to provide enhanced tenure security to Namibian citizens in communal areas. It is widely believed that security of tenure helps to promote socio-economic development of people and encourages sustainable use of natural resources, which includes rangelands, grazing and water. Furthermore, it helps to ensure food security, including for women, minorities and indigenous groups. During the period under review, statistics show that over 50 percent of communal land rights were registered and issued to males, compared to females across all financial years provided. This indicates women under representation.

As part of governmental efforts and commitment to address the past injustice in terms of access to agricultural commercial land, the government continues to implement the **National Resettlement Programme** that is aimed at addressing the inequitable access to land resources through an efficient, and participatory land reform, management, administration and resettlement process. To address concerns regarding commercial agricultural land, the government enacted the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, 1995 (Act No.6 of 1995), National Land Policy of (1998) and Revised National Resettlement Policy of 2023. These legal instruments aim to provide guidance to the administration of commercial agricultural land towards the attainment of the Government Land Reform objectives in the sector. During the period under review, Table 5 shows that the majority of males

(69.2%) were resettled during 2021/2022 financial year period, while from the 2022/2023 financial year, over 50 percent females were resettled which signifies an improvement.

Figure 1: Communal land rights and national resettlement programme statistics by financial year and sex

Financial year	Communal Land rights (Customary & Leasehold)					Resettlement						
	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Not stated	%
2020/2021	7342	3965	54.0	3377	46.0	20	8	40.0	8	40.0	4	20.0
2021/2022	8014	4455	55.6	3559	44.4	65	45	69.2	20	30.8	0	0.0
2022/2023	1963	1046	53.3	917	46.7	18	6	33.3	9	50.0	3	16.7
2023/2024	6599	3631	55.0	2968	45.0	26	12	46.2	14	53.8	0	0.0

1.1.5. Poverty Eradication, Social Protection and Social Services

Namibia developed and implemented the Social Protection Policy 2021 - 2030 which is efficient and effective in addressing risks and vulnerabilities faced by all Namibians across the life cycle. This is to reduce poverty and inequalities and improve the livelihoods of the people, particularly women, poor and vulnerable. The objectives of the Policy above are to increase coverage and access to social protection services by all Namibians; coordinate and integrate mechanisms to strengthen and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection interventions; enhance the institutional framework for the delivery of social protection; improve the government's ability to respond to sudden/severe shocks that may affect many households simultaneously and food security; improve monitoring and evaluation of social protection. Government undertook measures to convert in-kind food assistance programmes for Food Bank and Marginalized special feeding programmes into a monthly cash transfer, as a first step to phase in a Conditional Basic Income Grant, in line with the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) II.

The Namibian government continues to implement the universal grant for old age. The grant was increased in the 2023/2024 financial year from N\$ 1,300 to N\$ 1,400 per beneficiary to all Namibian citizenship/permanent residents (if not born in Namibia) with 60 years of age and above. Namibia has achieved (97.0%) coverage of the Old Age Grant, translating to a total of 204,379 beneficiaries. In addition, the government continues to provide Maintenance, Special Maintenance, Foster, Orphans, and Vulnerable Grants provided to all children that are vulnerable below the age of 16 with an amount of N\$350.00 per month. Namibia achieved (75.0%) of coverage, translating to a total beneficiary of 379,213. Furthermore, the government provides disability grants of N\$1,400.00 per month to persons 16 years or above and medically certified by a state doctor as being temporarily or permanently disabled (visually impaired people included). Namibia has achieved (75.0%) coverage on disability grants, translating to a total beneficiary of 53,835. Namibia provides a Basic Income Grant which caters for previous foodbank beneficiaries for persons in object poverty between the ages of 18 to 59. There are 8170 active beneficiaries on the system benefitting 35,308 household members. Namibia also provides funeral benefit grants to all beneficiaries of old age to a value of N\$3,500 which caters for burial services of the beneficiaries.

Moreover, the government continues to provide food supplements to marginalised communities (San, Ovatie and Ovatjimba). During the review period, 29 004 households benefited from the Special

Feeding Programme. Furthermore, the government also provides Land Reform/Re-distribution through access to land, housing, and water and sanitation projects as well as Livelihood Support Programmes: Empowerment Projects in areas of gardening, livestock, poultry, bakery, and beekeeping. Furthermore, the government undertook measures to convert in-kind food assistance programmes for Food Bank and Marginalized special feeding programmes into a monthly cash transfer, as a first step to phase in a Conditional Basic Income Grant, in line with the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP) II.

During the period under review, 199 946 beneficiaries benefited from the Old Age Grant; 50 288 Persons With Disabilities benefited from the Disability Grant; 357 036 Orphans and Vulnerable Children benefited from the OVC Grant; 8 107 benefited from the Funeral benefits; and 8 060 households benefited from the Conditional Basic Income Grant.

The above is illustrated in the table below:

Table 9: 2022/2023 Social Assistance Coverage

Grant Name	Number of Beneficiaries
Old Age Grant	199 946
Disability Grant	50 288
OVC Grants	357 036
Funeral Benefits	8 107
Conditional Basic Income Grant	8 060

Source: MGEPEWSW Annual Report 2022/2023

1.1.6. Efforts to Eliminate Violence against Women and Children

Namibia has amended and promulgated legislations to address GBV and VAC. These include the Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022) , Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022) and Childcare and Protection Act 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015), under review. In addition, the government continues to implement the National campaign on GBV and VAC through the implementation of the prioritized National Plan of Action on GBV (2019-2023), National Agenda for Children (2018-2022), National Plan of Action on VAC (2021-2025) and the National Training Manual and Resource Kit on GBV. The focus is to put survivors first and stimulate a culture of care amongst families, communities and institutions which promotes early help-seeking to prevent or limit harm. Government continues to raise awareness on GBV prevention and response to targeting community members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders.

Moreso, during the period under review, the Namibian government continues to implement other existing legislations. These include:

- (i) Witness Protection Act 2017 (Act No. 11 of 2017);
- (ii) Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018 (Act No 1 of 2018), under review;
- (iii) Combating of Immoral Practices Amendment Act 7 of 2000

In 2021, Namibia developed the Investment Case on Family Planning and GBV, aimed at outlining strategic approaches and necessary investments to advance these crucial areas of public health and social development. These cases serve as a roadmap for strategic investments prioritizing human rights, health equity, and social justice. Additionally, the government and stakeholders are actively mobilizing resources to address, prevent, and respond to GBV.

Furthermore, Government continues to strengthen and implement the male engagement programme with the aim to promote greater involvement of men in prevention of HIV and GBV, safe motherhood, fatherhood initiatives, family planning, reaching boys and young men and promote positive gender norms and positive change as well as covering Men Sexual Reproductive Health. During the review period and through this programme, Namibia successfully convened three National Men Conferences in partnership with civil society which brought together about 3300 men from various Namibian regions with the aim of addressing toxic masculinity and negative social norms that perpetuate GBV. In addition, through this programme, awareness raising on male involvement in the prevention of GBV, and HIV/AIDS is being conducted in all Namibian regions continuously.

Moreover, the government with all the stakeholders implemented the recommendation of the National Formative Study on Child Marriage launched in 2020, as well as various programmes aimed at addressing VAC. In addition, the government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, has established 17 Gender -Based Violence Protection Units (GBVPU) in 14 regions to provide primary services to survivors of GBV. At these units, MGEPEWS and MoHSS support victims through integrated case management including psychosocial support; protection services through the Namibian Police; and care and treatment services by the MoHSS. The MGEPEWS acquired nine shelters in eight regions to accommodate victims of GBV, VAC and TIP. Modalities to sustainably operationalise are being explored. There are two private shelters for GBV and 18 Residential Child Care Facilities subsidised by the MGEPEWS.

Combating violence against children is one of the top priorities of the Namibian government. There is a political will and commitment to protect our most vulnerable members of society, our children. By becoming a Pathfinding Country, the Government of the Republic of Namibia continues to show the joint commitment by all key Ministries Namibia developed a five-year Roadmap the Namibia: National Plan of Action (2021-2025) to prevent and respond to VAC during the review period.

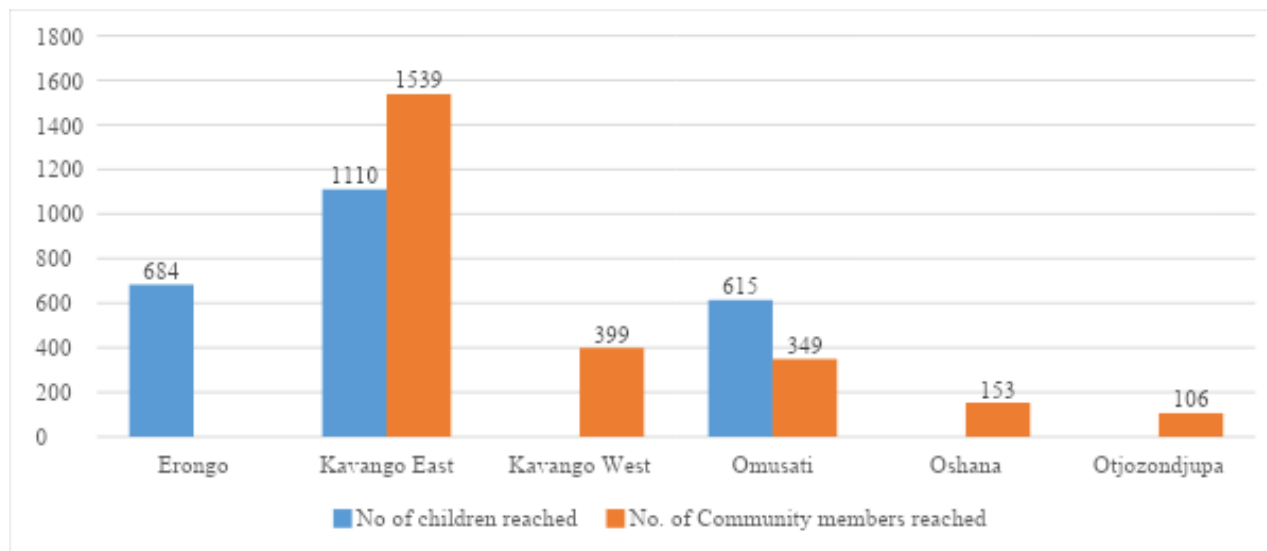
This National Plan of Action represents a selected group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help prevent violence against children in Namibia. These strategies include strengthening the policy and legislative environment, changing social norms to support parents and teachers and promoting positive parenting; enhancing parenting skills to promote healthy child development; income and economic support to families, response services to lessen harms and prevent future risk and providing life skills and education early in life.

In 2019, the National Statistics Agency (NSA) ITECH and CDC through PEPFAR, conducted the 1st National Violence Against Children Survey. The most comprehensive data on violence against children in Namibia comes from the VAC survey. The survey found that 39.6 percent of females and 45.0 percent of males age 18-24 have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence in childhood.

Cases of violence against children, including abuse, neglect, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, including online sexual exploitation, that has been reported to the authorities, investigated, prosecuted and include information on the sanctions imposed on the perpetrators.

In addition, the government through the MGEPEWS conducts sensitization campaigns on VAC and TIP. This activity entails an awareness campaign on VAC, and TIP among children, parents, caregivers and community members at large. During this reporting period, this activity was implemented in some regions as illustrated at the table below:

Figure 2: Number of Children and Adults reached through sensitization meetings on VAC and TIP by region (July-September 2023)



2. Top five (5) priorities for accelerating progress for girls and women over the past five years

- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security;
- Eliminating violence against women and girls;
- Political participation and representation;
- Gender responsive budgeting;
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

3. Measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of specific groups of women and girls

Although there were no specific programmes designed to explicitly address violence against particular categories of women and girls who face numerous types of discrimination during the period under review, the government has acknowledged the necessity of raising awareness among all spheres of the community. This is particularly focusing on women and girls who have particular needs, such as those who reside in rural and remote areas such as marginalized communities (San, Ovatie, and Ovatjimba). Additionally, various programmes targeting marginalized communities were implemented. These include:

3.1 Education Support Programme for Women and Girls from marginalized Communities

Government implements Education Support Programme for marginalized communities. The programme aims to provide financial, moral, and psychosocial support to learners and students emanating from the Marginalized Communities at all education levels, Early Childhood Development, primary, secondary, and tertiary education. For the period 2020-2022, a total number of 832 students (437 females and 395 males) from institutions of higher learning benefited from the programme through the MGEPEWS.

3.2. Special Feeding Programme

Government through the MGEPEWS under the Livelihood programme implemented the Special Feeding Programme to support marginalized communities by providing healthy food supplements to

the San people, Ovaherero and Ovambo communities inclusive of women and girls. During the period under review, 29,004 households and over 114,315 individuals benefited from the programme.

3.3. Land Re-distribution

The government implements the land redistribution programme for Marginalised Communities which aims to provide access to land and housing. It further aims to facilitate the acquisition and redistribution of land to Marginalised Communities both in Commercial and Communal areas. It also ensures that the Marginalised Communities are provided with and access to basic needs such as decent shelter, potable water and sanitation facilities in all the regions they reside. Government spent N\$ 3,349,478.27 for the 2022/23 Financial year by installing water infrastructures for Marginalised Communities including indigenous women and girls in remote areas and women and girls with disabilities from different Regions. During the 2024/2025 financial year, out of the N\$1.9 billion allocated to the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform under Vote 37, N\$50 million is dedicated for land purchase to address the plight of generational farm workers. The commitment from the government is outlined in the Prioritised National Plan of Action on GBV (2019-2023) under Action Area 2 outcome: Reaching every Namibian Harnessing Community Networks. Under this outcome, a number of community volunteers who are members of existing networks will provide GBV prevention awareness and services to women and girls experiencing violence.

3.4 Education Support Programme for Persons with Disabilities

The programme aims to provide financial support to students with disabilities at tertiary level. In 2017, the Division of Disability Affairs initiated the Student with Disability Grant Programme in collaboration with NSFAP to fund. In 2018/2019, a total number of 27 students were assigned a sign language interpreter. During (2019/2020 FY), the programme assisted 37 students with four sign language interpreters, and during (2020/2021 FY), 65 students were assisted as well as seven sign language interpreters. This number has since increased in 2021/2022 FY to 98 students after the programme was implemented at regional level where application of potential students has been submitted. Furthermore, 148 students were financially supported during (2022/2023 FY) while during (2023/2024 FY) 169 students benefited from the programme.

3.5 Individual Support Programme

During the period under review, the government initiated the Individual Support Programme to cater for the special needs of persons with severe disabilities. The programme aims to provide portable toilets, portable showers, nappies, diapers, prep, special feeding milk and instant porridge to adults and children with severe disabilities, based on individual needs. The programme started with 60 beneficiaries in 2020/2021 FY. During 2021/2022, the number of beneficiaries has increased to 440, and in 2022/2023, the number of beneficiaries increased to 730, while in 2023/2024 FY the number has increased to 1116 beneficiaries who benefited from the programme during the period under review.

4. Humanitarian crisis caused by increasing droughts

Namibia has been experiencing persistent drought since 2016, and during the period under review which has caused farmers to destock thus affecting over a quarter of the population, who have no food security. Furthermore, Namibia was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, experiencing a deep of 8.5% in the economy in 2019-2020.⁸ This affected the implementation of the country's gender equality

⁸ UNICEF Namibia Country Office Annual Report 2021

programmes and interventions. Moreso, drought and Covid-19 resulted in the government allocating additional funds spent on these unforeseen situations, where the focus had to be on rescuing the lives of those at risk, by re-prioritizing and diverting funds to cater for these humanitarian crises.

4.1. Measures taken to prevent and respond to humanitarian crises

During the period under review, the Namibian economy was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, experiencing a depth of 8.5 percent in 2020.⁹ This affected the implementation of the country's gender equality programmes and interventions. Incidences of GBV increased and 3 323 learners fell pregnant during the lockdown and did not return to school for fear of stigma¹⁰. However, government put in place efforts to respond to the pandemic. These interventions include reaching out to communities through virtual programmes, implementation of the prevention and management of Learner Pregnancy Policy, and the introduction of the emergency income grant of N\$ 750.00 to support households. Over 1300 entities applied for Social Security Commission for the wage bill subsidy.

The Namibian government also provided a water subsidy during lockdown so that people can access water without water cards at an estimated cost of N\$10m. During the pandemic, the government also subsidized various sectors of the economy that were hard hit by Covid-19 such as tourism, travel and aviation, and construction to help businesses keep hold of employees at an estimated cost of N\$ 400 million. Furthermore, the government supported the non-agricultural small business loan scheme worth N\$ 500 million through the Development Bank of Namibia and the agricultural business loan scheme worth N\$ 200 million through the Agricultural Bank of Namibia¹¹.

4.2. Gender Equality and Gender Based violence and violence Against Children

Under the review period, the Namibian government integrated gender into the existing National Disaster Risk Strategies Structures and have taken gender as priority in all National disaster management policies.

5. Top five (5) priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls for the next five years

The following are the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls for the coming five years:

- (i) Gender mainstreaming and Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting;
- (ii) Eliminating violence against women and girls as well as Violence Against Children;
- (iii) Gender Responsive Social Protection
- (iv) Poverty Eradication, Agricultural productivity and food security;
- (v) Access to affordable quality health care, including mental health and psycho-social support, sexual reproductive health and rights for women and men with special focus on Maternal Health and HIV/AIDS;
- (vi) Gender Responsive Disaster Risk Prevention, Reduction and Resilience Building

⁹ UNICEF Namibia Country Office Annual Report 2021

¹⁰ Ministry of Educations Arts and Culture

¹¹ Covid 19 in Namibia APPR Report issue 2

- (vii) Promoting gender equality as part of environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies

SECTION THREE: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS (2020-2024)

The BPfA has six overarching dimensions that highlight the alignment and synergy between the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This section analyses the progress made across the 12 critical areas of the BPfA.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

6. Actions taken to advance gender equality in the world of work including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship

This section provides progress made to strengthen/enforce laws as well as workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors. Highlight is also given to equal pay legislation; measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace and measures to improve financial inclusion and access to credit, improved access to modern technologies, infrastructures and services, including for self-employed women including mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies. In addition, at the country level, legislation exists to ensure the non-discrimination of women and girls in the workplace hence it is discussed as measures are also being implemented through women's and girls' empowerment policies (e.g Affirmative Action) to ensure that recruitment does not discriminate against females.

6.1. Non-Discriminatory workplace policies and practices in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors

6.1.1 Implementation of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 1998 (Act No. 29 of 1998)

Article 10 of the Namibia Constitution states that “all persons shall be equal before the Law” and that “no person may be discriminated against on the ground of Sex, Race, Color, Ethnic Origin, Region, Creed or Social or Economic Status”. In Addition, Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution provides for Affirmative Action with the aim to redress Social, Economic or Education imbalances in the Namibia society. Moreover, article 95 provides for the “enactment of legislation to ensure equality of opportunity for women, to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of Namibian society; in particular, the government shall ensure the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination in remuneration of men and women. Furthermore, the government shall seek, through appropriate legislation, to provide maternity and related benefits for women.”

Affirmative Action Act 1998, (Act No. 29 of 1998) provides for the elimination of discrimination in the recruitment and promotion of previously designated groups such as women, Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Marginalized Communities (San, Ovaherero, Ovambo). In addition, the Labour Amendment Act 2012 (Act No. 2 of 2012) further makes provision for non-discriminatory practices on various grounds including disability, HIV status, and pregnancy, among others. The law also prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. According to Section 26(3) of the Labour Act of 2007, during maternity leave, employment contract terms remain in effect, and employers must pay all remuneration except the

basic wage. The Social Security Commission (SSC), as per the Social Security Act of 1994, covers the basic wage component of maternity leave, capped at N\$15,000 per month for up to 12 weeks.

6.1.2 Employment Equity Commission

Since the previous reporting, the Employment Equity Commission, continues to monitor implementation of the provisions of the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 1998 (Act No. 29 of 1998). The commission collates information from affirmative action reports submitted by companies that have more than 25 employees, as well as from offices, ministries, or agencies covered by the Public Service Act of 1995.

6.1.3. Measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace

Namibia has taken significant steps to strengthen its legal framework concerning GBV and harassment in the workplace through the ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 (C190). This convention, which was adopted at the International Labour Conference on June 21, 2019, aims to eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, including GBV. On October 20, 2020, Namibia's National Assembly ratified C190, and the instruments of ratification were deposited at the ILO Headquarters on December 9, 2020. Namibia became the third ILO member state and the first African state to ratify this convention.

In addition, The Government of the Republic of Namibia and its stakeholders remain committed to implementing laws aimed at addressing violence against women and girls and has taken measures to address violence against women and girls. During the period under review, Namibia amended and promulgated new legislations to ensure alignment with international instruments on gender equality. These include:

- Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022);
- Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022);

Furthermore, the government continues to implement other existing legislations. These include:

- Witness Protection Act, 2017 (Act No. 11 of 2017);

The Witness Protection Act, 2017, (Act No. 11 of 2017) commencement notice was published in the Government Gazette of 31 August 2023, in terms of which the Act was operationalized as of September, 1st 2023. As a result, the Ministry of Justice has established a Witness Protection Unit. The function of the unit is to formulate regulations, policies, agreements and to oversee all operational activities to ensure full implementation of the said Act. In addition, government continues to implement other existing legislations. These include:

- Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015), under review
- Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 (Act No 1 of 2018),
- Labour Act, 2007 (Act No. 11 of 2007)

Moreover, The government I still implementing the National campaign on GBV and VAC through the implementation of the prioritized National Plan of Action on GBV (2019-2023) and the National Training Manual and Resource Kit on GBV. The focus is to put survivors first and stimulate a culture of care amongst families, communities and institutions which promotes early help-seeking to prevent or limit harm. The government continues to raise awareness on GBV prevention and response to targeting community members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders.

7. Measures taken to recognize and value unpaid care & domestic work

7.1 Expanded Childcare Services making IECD more Affordable

Namibia increased the availability of childcare services and reduced the cost of the country's current Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) programmes over the review period. The goal of IECD programmes is to address new and developing concerns related to the survival, development, and growth of young children while increasing public awareness of these children's circumstances and the significance of IECD service provision. The cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of a child is all considered holistically by the IECD.

Moreover, to ensure an increase in enrollment for children in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes, the government continues to strengthen community mobilization programmes to encourage parents and caregivers to enroll the children. More ECD centres were subsidized during the period under review. ECD Centres Feeding Programme was strengthened and capacity building sessions for ECD Educators were conducted.

In order to increase the provision of quality accessible and affordable childcare, Namibia implemented ECD through the establishment and monitoring of ECD centres in the country for children aged 0-4 years. During the review period, Government subsidized 1 365 ECD Educators serving community based ECD centres in all 14 regions. Moreover, Namibia had reviewed and developed the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy 2022-2030. Furthermore, during the period under review Namibia constructed 48 ECD Centres in all 14 Regions since 2019. In addition, 50 ECD Centres were renovated in all 14 regions.

Number of children enrolled in ECD Centres

Year	Male	Female	Total
2019	47 156	50 525	97 681
2021	41 864	41 760	83 624
2022	46 450	49 284	95 734
2023	48 465	51 941	100 406

Source: MGEPEWSW 2023 Annual Report

7.2. Capacity building for the Early Childhood Development Educators

IECD interventions in Namibia are currently implemented in the integration of health, nutrition, social protection, family and child protection and or parent/caregiver support as well as opportunities for early learning. The ministry is providing the ECD training to Educators who are nurturing or stimulating children 0-4 years old. The government is also providing a monthly allowance of N\$1 500 or N\$ 2000 or N\$ 2500 to ECD Educators. Moreover, under the review period, there were 100 406 children enrolled in the ECD centres, of whom 48 465 were girls and 51 941 were boys. The government also offers free Pre-primary Education for 5 to 6 year-old children in the formal education system and 50.0 percent girls were enrolled in Pre-primary in 2018.

Table 5: Number of Educarers receiving Subsidy

Year	Male	Female	Total
2019	50	1 142	1 192
2021	47	997	1 044
2022	55	1 105	1 160
2023			1365

Table 6: Number Educarers trained by the MGEPEWSW

Year	Male	Female	Total
2019	79	1 433	1 512
2021	76	1 245	1 321
2022			1295

Source: MGEPEWSW 2024

ECD Management Information System Database

During the period under review, the assessment and registration modules were added in the Early Childhood Development Management Information System database. All regions have utilized the system to carry out assessments. Over 3000 ECD Centres were assessed for compliance standards ECD centres¹².

Thrive by 5 Parenting App

In 2023, Namibia launched the Thrive by 5 Parenting App. The App is designed to develop and disseminate content to parents. The content is a collection of activities that parents and caregivers can use to interact with their children in a deliberate manner, to enhance the children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. This helps the parents and caregivers when raising the children so that their brain develops as early before the age of (5) five.

7.3. Implementation of regulations relating to Domestic Workers

During the period under review, the government continued to implement section 4 of the regulations relating to domestic workers as provided by the Labour Act, 2007 (Act No 11 of 2007), minimum wage which states that:

- (i) With effect from 1 October 2017 the minimum wage for domestic workers, to whom this Order applies, is N\$ 502.05 per month; N\$ 346.89 per week; N\$ 69.37 per day; N\$ 8.67 per hour; and N\$ 43.35 per day for part-time domestic workers who work five hours or less in any day other than a Sunday or public holiday;

¹² MGEPEWSW 2022/23 Annual report

- (ii) The minimum overtime pays and minimum pay to be paid to domestic workers for work on Sundays and public holidays are as follows: N\$13.00 per hour for overtime as contemplated in section 17(2) of the Act; N\$ 17.34 per hour for work on Sundays as contemplated in section 21(5) of the Act; N\$ 17.34 per hour for work on public holidays as contemplated in section 22(7) of the Act; or N\$ 86.70 per day for part-time domestic workers who work five hours or less;
- (iii) With effect from 1 October 2018, the minimum wage referred to in subparagraph (1) must be increased by one percent plus a percentage equal to the average of the increases in the inflation rates, for the categories “Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages” and “Housing, Water, Electricity, gas and other fuels”.

In addition, the country continues to invest in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women.

8. Action to reduce digital divide

During the period under review, the Namibian Government made concerted efforts to implement the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy for Education developed in 2007 which aims to promote literacy and encourages women and girl’s participation in the new economies and societies arising from ICT related developments. In 2022, Namibia passed the Access to Information Act 2022 (Act No. 8 of 2022) that aims to promote free access to information from public and private entities. In addition, the government made efforts to ensure access to internet for educational purposes and set aside resources to ensure internet connectivity at institutions of higher learning¹³. Moreover, in 2023, The government through the MICT launched the National Cybersecurity and Awareness Strategy to protect citizens from cybercrimes. More so, the Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) installed ICT infrastructure as part of the laptop and data connectivity devices initiative at the various institutions of higher learning targeting needy students.

Namibia signed the Global Alliance “We Protect” commitment aiming at protecting children against online-sexual abuse and exploitation. In 2020, the Internet Society Namibia Chapter in partnership with the Web Foundation launched Namibia’s Women Rights Online, which set out to assess the gender divide, relevant content online and women empowerment 26, using specifically designed 14 indicators across the following five categories which includes: Internet Access and Women Empowerment, Affordability, Digital Skills and Education, Relevant Content and Services for Women, and online Safety. As a result of various efforts to promote gender equality, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of women in managerial or decision-making positions in media houses in Namibia. Data collected by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology from Media Houses show that 54.0 percent of decision-making positions in media houses were occupied by women as of 2022.¹⁴

In addition, the government through the MGEPEWSW has established the Child Online Protection Taskforce. This is a multi-sectoral approach that requires commitment from all sectors to take dedicated action against this emerging form of violence against children. The taskforce consists of members from Government institutions, ICT Industry, Regulatory Authorities, Civil Society, Children, Parents, Guardians and Caregivers, and Teachers, Academia and Development Partners. Namibia is in the

¹³ Tina Power, *Gender Digital Divide and Covid 19: Towards feminist internet regulations in Southern Africa*.

¹⁴ MICT

process of developing a framework for action to address and tackle online sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

9. Effects of the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment on the implementation of the BPfA

9.1 Legal Frameworks

During the period under review, the government implemented macroeconomic policies and guidelines aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, these include the public procurement Act 15 (Act No. 15 of 2015), which empowers women, and youth by creating economic opportunities and enhancing their participation in the mainstream economy. Namibia continues to implement the Communal Land Reform Act, (Act. 5 of 2002), that provides for equal rights for women to acquire communal land and register their rights.

Furthermore, women have equal rights to inherit land under the Communal Land Reform Act. Women also get preference in resettlement programmes under the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, (Act. 6 of 1995). Both the Communal Land Reform Act, (Act. 5 of 2002), and the Agricultural (Commercial) Land Reform Act, (Act. 6 of 1995, make provision for women's representation in land administration. The National Gender Policy 2010-2020 contains strategies on addressing gender, poverty and rural development.

The country continues to implement the Operating Guidelines for the Income Generating Support Programme (2017–2022), that facilitates equitable socio-economic empowerment of women and men and promotes self-reliance, through the provision of materials and equipment, skills training, and support women business activities. 70.0 percent of the beneficiaries of this programme are women, and the benefits they derive from it notably support the social progression and economic advancement of women.

9.2. Effects of Covid-19

During the period under review, the Namibian economy was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, experiencing a depth of 8.5% in 2020.¹⁵ This affected the implementation of the country's gender equality programmes and interventions. Incidences of GBV increased and 3 323 learners fell pregnant during the lockdown and did not return to school for fear of stigma¹⁶. However, government put in place efforts to respond to the pandemic. These interventions include: reaching out to communities through virtual programmes, implementation of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy, and the introduction of the emergency income grant of N\$ 750.00 to support affected households and over 1300 entities applied for Social Security Commission for the wage bill subsidy.

Furthermore, the government provided water subsidy during the lockdown so that people can access water without water cards at an estimated cost of N\$10 million. Government also subsidized various sectors of the economy that were hard hit by Covid 19 such as tourism, travel and aviation, and construction to help businesses keep hold of employees at an estimated cost of N\$ 400 million. Moreover, the government supported the non-agricultural small business loan scheme worth N\$ 500

¹⁵ UNICEF Namibia Country Office Annual Report 2021

¹⁶ Ministry of Educations Arts and Culture

million through the Development Bank of Namibia and the agricultural business loan scheme worth N\$ 200 million through the Agricultural Bank of Namibia¹⁷.

POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

10. Actions taken to reduce/ eradicate poverty among women and girls

This section provides an analysis of the progress made to strengthen social protection programmes for women and girls; broaden access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services as well as support for women's entrepreneurship and business development activities. During the period under review, progress has been noted in areas such as:

10.1. Development of the Social Protection Policy 2021-2030

During the period under review, Namibia launched the Social Protection Policy 2021-2030 which aims to address risks and vulnerabilities faced by all Namibians across the life cycle to reduce poverty and inequalities, improve the livelihoods of the people, particularly women, poor and vulnerable. Hence the specific objectives are: to increase coverage and access to social protection services by all Namibians; coordinate and integrate mechanisms to strengthen and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection interventions; enhance the institutional framework for the delivery of social protection; improve Government's ability to respond to sudden/severe shocks that may affect many households simultaneously and ensure food security; improve monitoring and evaluation of social protection. Through the implementation of the policy, the government undertook measures to convert in-kind food assistance programmes for Food Bank and Marginalized special feeding programmes into a monthly cash transfer, as a first step to phase in a Conditional Basic Income Grant, in line with National Development Plans (NDP5).

Further, the government implemented the Blueprint on Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Reduction, with the aim of laying a foundation for achieving prosperity for all through implementing measures that will eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Blueprint is underway.

10.2. Land rights and tenure Security

The implementation of Communal Land Reform Act, 2002 (Act No. 5 of 2002) as amended continues to be strengthened to harness the allocation of rights in respect of communal land, to establish Communal Land Boards and to provide for the powers of Chiefs and Traditional Authorities in relation to communal land. Section 26 of the law makes provision for the communal land rights to be re-allocated to the surviving spouse of the deceased person.

The flexible Land Tenure Act 4 of 2012 became operational in 2018. The law aims to create alternative forms of land titles that are simpler and cheaper to administer than existing forms of land titles; to provide security of titles to persons who live in informal settlements or who are provided with low-income housing; as well as to empower the person concerned economically by means of these rights. Starter title schemes and land hold title schemes may only be established on land situated within the boundaries of a municipality, town or village council or within boundaries of a settlement area. This law is being piloted in two towns.

¹⁷ Covid 19 in Namibia APPR Report issue 2

Table 7: Budget allocation for the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform

Vote 37: Agriculture and Land Reform	2022/2023 (Actual)	2023/2024 (Revised)	2024/2025 (Actual)
	N\$ 366,826,371	N\$ 421,393,000	N\$ 1,937,358,000

10.3. Women’s access to housing

During the review period, the Cabinet in 2023 approved the revised National Housing Policy and Implementation Action Plan, which provides the accelerated interventions and actions to scale up the upgrading of informal settlements countrywide. In Windhoek, a total of 53 houses were built under the Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme by the National Housing Enterprise (NHE)¹⁸. 89 houses built under the Government sponsored Mass Housing Development Programme (MHDP) at Matutura Extension 9, Swakopmund, Erongo Region. To date, a total of 680 houses have been constructed in different informal settlements of Windhoek, through the Programme, with NHE and the City of Windhoek as the direct implementers. In addition, the NHE constructed 50 houses in Omuthiya, 24 in Ondangwa and 70 in Okahao during the month of November 2023. The National Housing Enterprises also constructed and handed over 200 affordable housing units at Ekuku Extension 6 in 2019 while 123 houses were constructed and handed over to clients from the Rundu while in Omuthiya 50 houses were constructed.

In Namibia, women have access to Government Affordable Housing facilities such as Mass housing project and National Housing Programme “Build Together”. The government subsidises Non-Governmental initiatives such as the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia. During the period, 2019/2020-2023/20204, 7 221 houses were constructed by Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia with the technical support of Namibia Housing Action Group¹⁹. Women have access to affordable housing loans that are guaranteed through the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF).

10.4. Women’s entrepreneurship and business development (Training & IGA’s)

In order to expedite the process of providing beneficiaries with IGAs material and equipment, the government has continued to execute the Operating Guidelines for the Income Generating Support Programme (2017–2022) during the time under review. According to the standards, each financing cycle must have a support ratio of 70 percent women to 30 percent men. The guidelines are currently being reviewed.

Table 8: Number of female and male beneficiaries 2019/2020-2023/2024 FY

Financial Year	Total# of IGAs	Main Beneficiaries (Female)	Main Beneficiaries (Male)
2019/20	97	68	29
2020/21	67	50	17
2021/22	42	32	10
2022/23	57	34	23

¹⁸ Ministry of Urban and Rural Development Newsletter 2023

¹⁹ Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) Annual Report 2022

2023/24	71	47	24
Total	334	231	103

Source: MGEPEWSW 2023 Annual report

Table 8 above shows the total number of female and male beneficiaries from the IGA programme supported by the MGEPEWSW from 2019/2020-2023/2024 Financial Years (FY). The figure shows that there has been a significant increase in females supported IGAs compared to those of males over the period under review. It also shows that 334 IGAs were supported during the review period.

10.5. Women in Business Associations

During the period under review, Government through the MGEPEWSW established Women in Business Associations (WBA) at the Constituency and Regional levels. The WBA serves as a platform that assists women entrepreneurs to mobilise resources, access to finance and support them to effectively market their products and services through market linkages and value addition. For the 2022/2023 Financial Years, two (2) regional WBA seminars were held with the aim of training regional WIBA committee members on their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, the government continues to implement the Acceleration of Women Owned Micro-Enterprises (AWOME) programme which aims to build the capacity of women micro-entrepreneurs using the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) manuals. In 2022/2023 financial year, the MGEPEWSW trained 136 and 164 potential women micro entrepreneurs on two (2) of the three (3) AWOME SIYB training manuals²⁰.

More than 57.9 percent of the Namibia population (2 324 388) of which 52.0 percent are women who live in rural areas²¹. Therefore, the rural development programme is vital as most farming and tourism activities take place in rural areas. To this effect, the government through the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development (MURD) has implemented quick impact projects including rural based cooperatives to create employment and drive economic growth. During the period under review, the programmes reached about 56 012 beneficiaries across the country.

10.6. Namibian Youth Credit Scheme (NYCS)

Namibia continues to implement the Namibia Youth Credit Scheme, designed to encourage and support youth entrepreneurship through loans to unemployed young people who do not qualify for funding through the mainstream banking system (Ministry of Sport, Youth & National Service, 2024). The Credit for Youth in Business (CYB) is hosted by the National Youth Council of Namibia. It is a loan guarantee programme. This means that for a loan under this programme, you do not need collateral. The CYB targets Namibian youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years and provides financial support to youth that do not have adequate collateral to access loans from commercial banks. The loans offered range from N\$3 000 to maximum N\$20 000 and are repaid with a reasonable interest of not more than 20.0 percent of the total amount per loan term. The programme operates through an individual and group lending system and provides training to beneficiaries in basic management practices, access to credit, follow-up training and counseling and mentoring of beneficiaries.

Furthermore, in 2024, Namibia's unique risk insurer, the Namibia Special Risks Insurance Association (NASRIA) and Bank Windhoek have partnered on a credit guarantee scheme agreement worth N\$50 million. This initiative aims to empower the youth, women and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Namibia by addressing the critical issue of limited access to credit. The scheme provides much-

²⁰ MGEPEWSW Annual Report 2022/23

²¹ Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey Report (NID), 2016

needed financial support to aspiring entrepreneurs, fostering innovation, job creation and economic growth.

10.7 Low-cost legal services for women living in poverty

During the period under review, Namibia amended and promulgated new legislations to ensure alignment with international instruments on gender equality. These include the Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022), and the Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022), which came into operation on the 15th day of May 2024.

Namibia through the Ministry of Justice has a programme on Legal Aid which provides training of Law enforcement and judiciary on Protection orders and the handling of GBV cases. A GBV Training Manual has been developed with the assistance of a Development Partner (UNICEF) with the objective to sensitise new recruits on GBV and how to deal with GBV victims at police stations once deployed. The government ensures that adequate funding is provided to the legal aid fund and that women pursuing divorce, maintenance and gender-based violence cases in particular have access to justice in all parts of the state party. The Ministry of Justice has recently made a significant amendment to the regulations of the Legal Aid Act, (Act No. 29 of 1990) by increasing the income threshold in qualifying for legal aid from N\$ 3500 to 7000 Namibian dollars. The reason for the increase is to ensure that more individuals have access to legal assistance.

10.8. Challenges

- Unavailability of sex-disaggregated data
- Economic activity remains low since most businesses are very small and informal in rural areas
- Prevalent high unemployment rate among women
- Women still have limited access to and ownership of land

10.9. Future priorities

- Implementation of the revised National Gender Equality and Equity Policy
- Implementation of the Social Protection Policy

11. Access to Social Protection for Women and Girls

11.1. Social Protection Policy 2021-2030

During the period under review, Namibia launched the Social Protection Policy 2021-2030 which aims to address risks and vulnerabilities faced by all Namibians across the life cycle to reduce poverty and inequalities, improve the livelihoods of the people, particularly women, poor and vulnerable. Hence the specific objectives are: to increase coverage and access to social protection services by all Namibians; coordinate and integrate mechanisms to strengthen and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection interventions; enhance the institutional framework for the delivery of social protection; improve the government's ability to respond to sudden/severe shocks that may affect many households simultaneously and food security; improve monitoring and evaluation of social protection. Through the implementation of the policy, the government undertook measures to convert in-kind food assistance programmes for Food Bank and Marginalized special feeding programmes into a monthly cash transfer, as a first step to phase in a Conditional Basic Income Grant, in line with National Development Plans (NDP5).

11.2. Safety Protection Schemes

The old age grant was increased in 2023/24 financial year from N\$ 1,300 to N\$ 1,400 per beneficiary to all Namibian citizenship/permanent residents if not born in Namibia with 60 years of age and above. The government continues to provide Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) grants (Maintenance, Special Maintenance, Foster, Orphans, and Vulnerable Grants), to all children that are vulnerable below the age of 16 who receive an amount of N\$350.00 per month. Furthermore, the government provides the disability grant of N\$ 1,400.00 per month to persons with disability or medically certified by a state doctor as being temporarily or permanently disabled (visually impaired people included). Persons with full-blown AIDS as certified by a medical doctor (CD4 count of less than 200).

For 2023, 97.0 percent coverage of the Old Age Grant was achieved representing 199 946 beneficiaries. This is an increase from 192 866 of the previous year, while the Disability Grant achieved a 74.0 percent coverage, representing 50 288 beneficiaries (45 960 Permanent Disability Grant and 4 328 Temporary Disability Grant). The OVC Grant attained 73.0 percent coverage, with 357 036 children receiving different types of children's Grants. Funeral benefits covered 96.0 percent. A total of 8 107 beneficiaries were processed. The Conditional Basic Income Grant (CBIG) attained 85.0 percent disbursement of grants to 8 060 beneficiaries. This is illustrated in the table below:

Table 9: 2022/2023 Social Assistance Coverage

Grant Name	Number of Beneficiaries	% Coverage
Old Age Grant	199 946	97
Disability Grant	50 288	74
OVC Grants	357 036	73
Funeral Benefits	8 107	96
Conditional Basic Income Grant	8 060	85

Source: MGEPEWSW Annual Report 2022/2023

11.3. Social Protection in response to Covid-19

The Covid-19 epidemic had a significant negative impact on Namibia's economy over the time under review, with a depth of 8.5% in 2020. This had an impact on how the nation's programs and initiatives for gender equality were implemented. GBV cases increased, and during the lockdown, 3323 students became pregnant. Out of fear of being stigmatized, many children chose not to return to school. Nonetheless, the government launched a pandemic response initiative. Among these interventions are the use of virtual programs to engage communities, the introduction of the N\$ 750.00 emergency income grant to support households, and the implementation of the Policy on the Prevention and Management of Learners Pregnancy. In addition, over 1300 entities applied to the Social Security Commission for the wage bill subs

Government also provided a water subsidy during lockdown so that people can access water without water cards at an estimated cost of N\$ 10 million. The Namibian government also subsidized various sectors of the economy that were hard hit by Covid-19 such as tourism, travel and aviation, and construction to help businesses keep hold of employees at an estimated cost of N\$ 400 million. Furthermore, the government supported the non-agricultural small business loan scheme worth N\$ 500

million through the Development Bank of Namibia and the agricultural business loan scheme worth N\$ 200 million through the Agricultural Bank of Namibia²².

11.4. Lesson learned

- Harmonization of Social Protection programmes/ Services across Government Institutions helps to address duplication of services

11.5. Future priorities

- Roll out of the Conditional Basic Income Grant Programme
- Strengthen National programmes to reduce poverty & hunger
- Strengthen Social Protection Programmes for vulnerable Women and Girls from Marginalized Communities and Persons with Disabilities
- Strengthen the Promotion of Skills Development and Community empowerment Programmes

12. Actions to Improve Health Outcomes for Women and Girls

12.1 Development of the National eHealth Strategy 2021-2025

To improve health outcomes including for women and girls, Namibia developed the National eHealth Strategy 2021-2025 during the period under review. The eHealth Strategy provides a guide on how Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) will contribute to Namibia's health systems transformation agenda. The strategy provides a roadmap towards implementing eHealth. The primary goal of the strategy is to strengthen health service delivery through utilization of electronic solutions that respond to the priority needs of Namibia.

The goal will be accomplished through the following outcomes, derived from interactions with stakeholders in Namibia:

- All people within the health system accessing and sharing quality health information reliably and securely, in a timely manner, across geographic and health sector boundaries;
- Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of healthcare services at central, district, facility and community levels;
- Efficient and effective care to all patients;
- Scarce financial and human resources are effectively deployed²³

12.2. Programmes for addressing HIV and AIDS

According to the 2016 HIV sentinel surveillance, HIV prevalence in pregnant women was 17.2 percent (8.5% in 15-24-year-olds, 24.0% in 25-49 year olds), a slight increase from 16.9 percent in 2014. Namibia has been accelerating progress towards HIV epidemic control, and at the end of 2020 over 98.0 percent of People Living with HIV (PLWHIV) in Namibia were on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and exceeding the global target of 90.0 percent.

According to the 2021 Spectrum Model, the highest proportion of estimated new infections is among women older than 25 years, accounting for 38.8 percent while men older than 25 years are estimated to account for 23.1 percent. The NAMPHIA (2017) report recorded HIV prevalence among adults (ages 15-64 years) at 12.6 percent nationally. Among women, HIV prevalence was 15.7 percent while among

²² Covid 19 in Namibia APPR Report issue 2

²³ Ministry of Health and Social Services: National eHealth Strategy 2021-2025

men, it was 9.3 percent. HIV prevalence was highest among women aged 45-49 years (30.0%) and men aged 50-54 years (26.4%). Women are thus disproportionately infected as compared to men indicating that the pandemic remains feminized.

During the period under review, 92 percent of people living with HIV know their HIV status while 99 percent of those who know their status are initiated on treatment; and of those on treatment, 94 percent are virally suppressed. Nearly 100 percent of persons receiving antiretroviral therapy have transitioned to the more efficacious Dolutegravir containing regimen. The government continues to expand ART services to prevent Mother to Child Transmission of HIV which now stands at 91 percent coverage. In March 2023, Namibia received an international recognition award for the remarkable progress toward reaching the USAIDS 95-95-95 targets and efforts towards ending AIDS as a Public Health Threat by 2030. This was achieved through implementation of multi-pronged approaches that involved strengthening community empowerment programmes.

Namibia, like most of the countries in Southern Africa, is affected by the scourge of HIV and AIDS and other related health problems. During the period under review, the country has done well with regard to anti-retroviral drugs distribution and population coverage hence lessened the negative impact that HIV and AIDS could have had on the economy through affecting the productivity of the workforce. To improve health outcomes for women and girls, the country is currently accelerating the development of human capabilities in the health sector and addressing the shortage of health infrastructure facilities.

2020 compared with the UNAIDS 2012 estimates, Namibia has reduced its adult HIV incidence rate by 50 percent in the past five years. Namibia has reached or exceeded the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets among women and, nationally, by attaining 86-96-91 among adults, Namibia accomplished this through the strategic expansion of HIV prevention and treatment services, with a focus on viral load suppression at the individual and community level, and the swift implementation of forward-leading HIV policies. NAMPHIA results also suggest that women ages 15-24 still have a far higher HIV incidence rate (0.99%) than the same-aged young men (0.03%). This highlights the continued need for expanded primary HIV prevention in young women, including prevention through the PEPFAR-led DREAMS Partnership, and ensuring all men 25-35 are virally suppressed through the new MenStar Coalition.

12.3. Maternal Health

The 2013 NDHS estimated the maternal mortality ratio at 385 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, which was a reduction of 64 deaths per 100,000 live births from 449 deaths in 2006/7 representing a 14.0 percent²⁴. The 2013 NDHS shows that maternal deaths represent 9.0 percent of all deaths among women aged 15-49. The proportion of maternal deaths varies by age group, rising from 8.0 percent among women aged 15-19 to a peak of 13.0 percent among women aged 20-24 and then declining to 6.0 percent among women aged 45-49. Maternal Mortality has been on a declining trend from 2009 to 2020. Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) was estimated at 215/100,000 live births in 2020 (World Health Organization, 2023). The country needs continued efforts to be within reasonable reach of this target.

The Namibian government continues to provide Antenatal care services for free in all public health facilities in the country. However, the proportion of women who received at least one ANC has dropped from 98.0 percent in 2018 (NAPHIA Report 2017) to 94.0 percent in 2023 (Programme data and population projections based on 2011 census). The proportions of women who deliver in health facilities remained higher than 94.0 percent over the report period. Similarly, the family planning and

²⁴ NDHS 2013

contraceptives are available in all public health facilities across the country and are provided free of charge to all in need. The contraceptive prevalence rate is at 50 percent, but the unmet needs for family planning are at 13.7 percent. One thousand three hundred and sixty-six (1366) community health workers were also trained and deployed in 25 health districts in 12 of the 14 regions of the country to deliver health services in the community and provide linkages between the community and the health service.

There is almost universal knowledge and awareness by men and women on reproductive health programmes, including contraception and elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV. In Namibia, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer after breast cancer and it is estimated that 236 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and 135 die from the disease each year. It is a highly preventable public health problem that can be eliminated if women have access to available screening and treatment services.

Cervical Cancer prevention activities are geared toward secondary prevention through screening using both pap smear and Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA). Since 2018, public health facilities have screened about 138,992 women using Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) and Pap smear screening methods, yet there remains a significant number of women who have not been screened yet. Women Living with HIV are at an increased risk of developing cervical cancer as HIV increases the chances of developing cervical cancer 6-fold.

Treatment of pre-cancer lesions is provided by trained nurses and medical officers as equipment is available at all health facilities that are implementing the services. The HPV vaccine is currently provided at private health facilities and can only be accessed by a small proportion of the population with medical aids/insurance. Plans are underway to introduce and roll out the HPV vaccine to girls aged 9-14 years at state primary care health facilities. Tertiary prevention services are offered at few intermediate hospitals and some others only available at National referral hospitals. There is a dire need to decentralize these services to treat cervical cancer effectively and save the lives of women diagnosed with cancer in early stages.

12.4. Gender-specific public awareness/health Promotion campaigns

The Ministry of Health and Social Services continues to conduct various population-specific health promotion campaigns for the period under review as reported in 2019. These include:

- Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) programme: During the period under review, the government with partners implemented the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) programme with the primary objective to reduce HIV transmission. The programme is implemented in all 14 regions, to contribute to the government's goal to circumcise 90 percent of the priority group of 15- to 29-year-old males by 2028. By 2023, 270 000 young boys and men were circumcised.

12.5. Mental Health

During the period under review, the Ministry of Health and Social Services, in collaboration with various stakeholders, commemorated World Mental Health Day through a diverse range of activities designed to raise awareness and promote mental well-being. These activities include sports events and community engagements aimed at empowering a broad spectrum of individuals, from healthcare workers to community and traditional leaders, as well as members of various workforces. The Ministry

recognizes the importance of a holistic approach to mental health, which is why significant efforts are being made to involve all segments of society in these initiatives.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry conducted Mental Health Resilience training programmes specifically tailored for healthcare workers. This training was designed to enhance their resilience and coping mechanisms amidst the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. Recognizing the integral link between mental health and physical health, the Ministry has also embarked on the integration of mental health services for people living with HIV (PLHIV). This integration aims to provide comprehensive care that addresses both the mental and physical health needs of PLHIV, thereby improving treatment adherence and achieving better viral suppression outcomes.

The surge in demand for mental health services, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, has underscored the critical need for a robust mental health workforce. However, the shortage of specialized mental health professionals poses a significant challenge. In response, the Ministry has launched training programmes to capacitate non-specialist healthcare workers, enabling them to deliver essential mental health services at the community level and beyond tertiary care facilities. These training initiatives are crucial in bridging the gap and ensuring that mental health services are accessible to all who need them.

The increase in mental health cases since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light the urgent necessity of shifting more focus and resources toward mental health. In 2023, the ministry recorded 10 616 new mental health illnesses and 9 252 patients were admitted with a mental health illness in health facilities.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services with partners launched the Mental health Awareness campaign, which is aimed at creating awareness, reducing stigma, promoting early intervention, and improving mental wellbeing in the country. The government also hosted two National Men Conferences attended by 1000 men during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV in 2023 which also focused on issues of GBV and Mental Health.

12.6. Challenges

- Although generally the country has made significant progress in fighting HIV, the pandemic is still a concern;
- Cultural norms negative masculinities that inhibit health seeking behaviours in men and boys also contribute to HIV risk;
- The absence of integrated SRH, HIV and GBV service packages to improve health outcomes including better access to care, reduced stigma, increased efficiency and empowerment.

13. Measures Taken to Improve Education Outcomes and Skills for Women and Girls

13.1. Implementation of the Universal Primary (2013) and Secondary (2016) Education

During the period under review, Namibia continued with the implementation of the free Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). The implementation of Universal Primary Education has led to an increase in the number of learners attending primary school from 545 075 in 2018 to 595 897 202022. The Secondary enrolment has increased 210 868 to 221 630 secondary

learners in 2022 (EMIS, 2022²⁵). During the tabling of the 2021/2022 financial year budget, the government abrogated value-added tax on sanitary pads.

13.2. Factors contributing to retention of learners in schools

The following policy initiatives continue to contribute significantly to the retention of learners in schools:

- Continuous implementation of the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy 2008, which enables girls to stay in school before delivery and come back to school after delivery;
- The Namibian School Feeding Programme, which covers 398,100 learners from Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary school;
- The introduction and expansion of hostel accommodation facilities for learners who come from homes far away from their school;
- The introduction of tax-free sanitary pads;
- Sector Policy on inclusive education introduced in 2013;
- Implementation of the School Safety Policy

13.3. Comprehensive sexuality education in schools or community programmes

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is provided through Life Skills subject. Although there was an increase in the percentage of schools that provided Life Skills-Based HIV and Sexuality Education from 76.2 percent in 2019 to 95.5 percent in 2020, another drop was recorded in 2021 at 78.1 percent. In 2020, 31 462 (21 044 female and 10 418 male) teachers were trained in life skills-based HIV and sexuality education. While in 2021, 32 003 (21 638 female and 10 365 male), teachers were trained. In 2022, 32 465 (22 096 female and 10 369 male) teachers were trained. Moreover, out of 466 456 young people aged 10-24 were reached through life skills-based HIV and Sexuality Education in 2022, while 466 641 were reached through Sexual reproductive Health and 472 814 were reached through transmission and prevention.

13.4. Measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and enabling adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/ or motherhood

Namibia continues to implement the Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in the Education Sector which strongly emphasises prevention, along with support and encouragement to learners who are mothers and fathers to complete their education and be good parents. This policy allows pregnant learners to remain in school until four weeks before their due date, encouraging learners to keep up with their lessons and homework, and allowing the mother to return to school as soon as the school is satisfied that both she and the baby are in good health and have a plan for the baby's care, while allowing for absence from school for a maximum of one year.

In 2021, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture launched the Integrated School Health Task Force. The programme, which is a collaborative initiative between the Ministries of Health and Social Services and Education Arts and Culture, aims to implement health-promoting school initiatives, focusing on promoting conducive teaching, learning and healthy lifestyles among learners.

²⁵ EMIS, 2022

During the period under review, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture launched the Namibian Coalition for Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHHM), to provide a platform for coordination and knowledge-sharing for the work being done by various stakeholders working in MHHM. Moreover, through the Value Added Tax (VAT) Amendment Act, (Act No.14 of 2022) which came into effect on Jan. 1, 2023, Government implements the zero tax on sanitary pads. Further, the Government, together with United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), supported the establishment of Menstrual Hygiene Management Clubs as part of the School Led Total Sanitation, programme in Namibia. Through this programme, girls and boys in schools are equipped with knowledge about menstruation and empowered to know the facts about this natural process. So far, 52 Menstrual Hygiene Management Clubs have been established country wide.

13.5. Scaling up of Technical and Vocational Education Training System

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is gaining increased focus and priority in government agendas for education and national development because it is perceived as a source of the technology, information, and skills required to propel economic change and productivity. TVET is essential for promoting economic transformation and productivity. With the high level of youth unemployed in Namibia (46.1% among age group 15-34 years) in 2018, as per the National Labour Force Survey, there is a need to look into TVET as an option to create employment. TVET is widely supported by empirical evidence as a possible remedy for social and economic problems plaguing societies, especially youth unemployment. The Government scaled up the TVET Programme to drive productivity and economic transformation and as an option for employment creation. Efforts in this regard, aligned with the National TVET Policy and Cabinet Decision Number 4th/23.03.21/005, which was implemented in March 2021. This policy serves as a cornerstone for the country's initiative and embodies the Ministry's dedication in fostering a skilled and inclusive workforce.

Table 10: Statistic on enrolment and completion in TVET by sex 2019-2023

YEAR	ENROLMENT			GRADUATES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2019	18273	13233	31506	6929	8135	15064
2020	18507	16413	34920	2368	2465	4833
2021	8513	8227	16740	5079	4055	9134
2022	13825	9587	23412	2198	2356	4554
2023	14330	9540	23870			

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Technology and Innovation 2024

13.6. Higher Education

During the period under review there was an increase in enrollment in institutions of higher learning. From 2019-2021, enrolment for male increased from 33.3 percent in 2019-34.1 percent in 2021, while that of females decreased from 66.7 percent in 2019 to 65.7 percent in 2021.

Table 11: Student Enrolment Distribution by Higher Education Institutions (HEI) by Sex 2019-2021

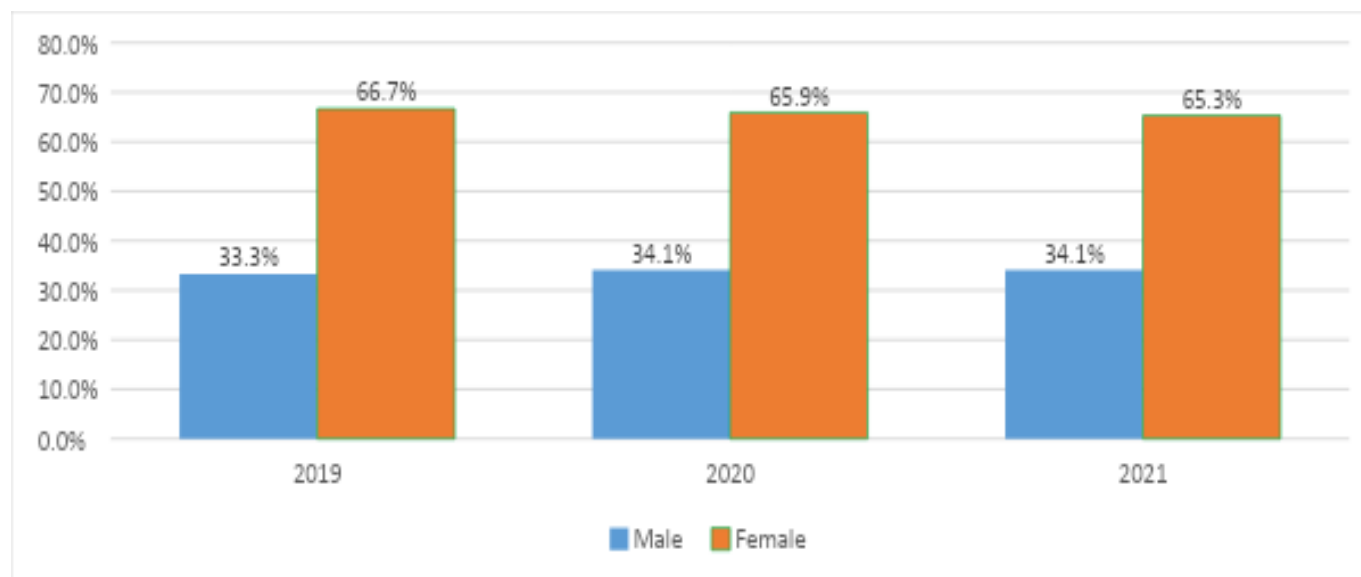


Table 12: Male and female enrollment at the International University of Management IUM (2021-2022)

Year	2021	2022
Male	3 691	4 439
Female	7 767	8808
Total	11 458	13 247

IUM Annual Report 2021/2022

Table 13: Enrollment of Female and Male students in Higher Education

Statistics on enrolments in numbers					Statistics on Enrolment in Per cent			
Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	22,110	22,715	23,918	25,901	33.3	34.1	34.7	36.1
Female	44,318	43,941	45,014	45,919	66.7	65.9	65.3	63.9
Grand Total	66,428	66,656	68,932	71,820	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 14: Female and Male Higher Education Completion rate

Statistics on completion in numbers					Statistics on completion in Per cent			
Sex	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	3,663	3,683	2,896	3,851	31.8	28.7	28.7	31.7
Female	7,865	9,129	7,212	8,289	68.2	71.3	71.3	68.3
Grand Total	11,528	12,812	10,108	12,140	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

13.7. Increase Access to STEM

During the review period, various initiatives designed to enhance the participation of women and girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) were implemented which include:

- **Establishment of makerspaces with focus on Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) and Computer Aided Design (CAD):** The government with support from the UNESCO Participation Programme assisted in the conceptualisation, setting up and seed funding for a digital Makerspace, Minds-In-Action, with a plan of action to include 50.0 percent of women beneficiaries. To date, the space has provided coding lessons to at least 5 000 girls from schools in the Khomas region, 400 girls in schools in Kunene region, and 400 girls from Otjozondjupa region. The Namibia Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) has a Memorandum of Understanding with Minds-In-Action, in the implementation of the Girls in STEM Coding Project for Kunene region. The increased participation of women and girls in STEM activities continues to be a priority for the NCRST through interventions such as the SADC Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Organisation and other initiatives.
- **International Day of Girls in ITC/ Women and Girls in Science:** NCRST celebrated the International Day of Girls in ICT / Women and Girls in Science in 2024. The objective of the event was to encourage young women and girls to pursue studies and careers in STEM and help them achieve their dreams; addressing the gender gap and accelerating actions towards empowering women and girls in scientific fields and to inspire, educate, and connect women and girls with opportunities in science while fostering a supportive community. The event was attended by approximately 90 participants, including school learners, students from higher education institutions, innovators, scientists, science advocates and representatives from various partner institutions.
- **International Women's Day:** NCRST celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March 2024, a United Nations initiative observed under the theme "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." The event brought together female innovators, scientists, learners, and science advocates. The aim was to share knowledge, experience, achievements and to inspire girls to take a more active interest in STEM fields. The celebration was attended by 30 participants.
- **Ms STEM Competition:** The NCRST, in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Namibia, the Embassy of Spain to Namibia, and the German Embassy in Namibia, hosted the Ms. STEM contest for university students. This innovative event aims to celebrate and promote excellence in STEM, identify emerging talents, and inspire future STEM leaders. Students had the opportunity to compete in the Mr. & Ms. STEM competitions, fostering their problem-solving and critical thinking skills as they vied for the official title of "Ms. STEM Ambassador" for STEM activities at NCRST. The event took place in 2023 and concluded with the crowning of the 2nd Princess, 1st Princess and Ms. STEM.
- **National Mathematics Olympiad (NMO):** The National Mathematics Olympiad (NMO) is an annual initiative organized by the NCRST in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), the University of Namibia (UNAM), and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The event is proudly sponsored by Debmarine Namibia. The NMO provides learners across Namibia with a platform to showcase their mathematical prowess through three enriching and competitive rounds: the school level, the Regional level, and the National level. Investing in this initiative helps nurture and cultivate the mathematical talent of Namibian youth. The primary aim of the Olympiad is to promote mathematics and popularize science and technology, with a particular focus on encouraging participation from female

students. Additionally, it seeks to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork among participants—skills essential for success in a rapidly evolving world. Each team in all rounds of the competition must consist of three girls and three boys. The top six performers (three girls and three boys) are awarded and go on to represent Namibia at the Pan African Mathematics Olympiad (PAMO) the following year. To further support the advancement of female students, a dedicated award is given to the overall female winner. Since the inception of the NMO in 2021, a total of 6,281 girls have participated in the project from 2021 to 2024.

- **The National Science Quiz:** NCRST has identified the NSQ as a unique and exciting initiative aimed at motivating, inspiring, encouraging, and rewarding children in their quest for knowledge. This platform provides them with an opportunity to showcase their scientific acumen. The primary objective of the quiz is to stimulate learners' interest in science and technology while simultaneously promoting the development of essential skills such as communication, strategic thinking, and teamwork, thereby igniting their passion for knowledge. The event is being organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) and is sponsored by Debmarine Namibia and Telecom Namibia. The total participation of girls in this project is 2,804 in 2023 and 2024.
- **The National Science Fair (NSF):** The National Science Fair (NSF) is an annual initiative organized by NCRST, in collaboration with the MoEAC, UNAM, and NUST. This event is proudly sponsored by Debmarine Namibia. The primary aim of the Science Fair is to promote science and technology among learners, the community, and educators. It serves as a platform to inspire learners, parents, and teachers to engage more actively in the study of science by providing learners with the opportunity to conduct and publicly present independent scientific research. In 2023, 74 girls participated at the national level, underscoring our commitment to fostering inclusivity and encouraging the pursuit of scientific inquiry among all learners.
- **STI Policy:** Namibia has a policy objective in the STI policy, to improve gender equality and mainstreaming in STEM. This is supported by two relevant strategies: Strategy 1: Establishing and improving programmes that support women's participation in STEM and Strategy 2: Supporting the role of women in innovation systems.
- **National Innovation Challenge for Women (NICW):** The NICW Programme is designed to address gender inclusiveness in the mainstream economy and employment creation which has been identified as a priority in the National Development Plan (NDP-5). The National Innovation Challenge for women program addresses several key barriers and provides opportunities that encourage greater access and engagement in STEM fields such as Energy and Water, Agriculture, Nutrition & Food Security, Value addition on Natural resources Health, ICT/Tech, Waste (Upcycling) and Cosmetics. Thus far, 16 Females have received seed funding towards supporting their innovative business to a total value of N\$ 3 130 000.00 over a period of six (6) years. 104 females have received business training and coaching to develop technical and entrepreneurial skills. All the 104 females benefited from the connections with industry professionals, investors, and other innovators.

Table 15: Enrollment by STEM and No-STEM NQF Fields of learning, 2022

Qualification Field of Learning	Number			Per Cent		
	Sex		Total	Sex		Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Agriculture and Nature Conservation	807	836	1,643	3.1	1.8	2.3
Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology	1,898	773	2,671	7.3	1.7	3.7
Health Science and Social Services	2,429	7,825	10,254	9.4	17.0	14.3
Physical, Mathematical and Computer Sciences	2,690	1,650	4,340	10.4	3.6	6.0
Physical Planning and Construction	568	418	986	2.2	0.9	1.4
Total STEM Fields	8,392	11,502	19,894	32.4	25.0	27.7
Business, Commerce and Management	5,855	8,603	14,458	22.6	18.7	20.1
Communication Studies and Languages	792	1,526	2,318	3.1	3.3	3.2
Culture and the Arts	260	618	878	1.0	1.3	1.2
Education, Training and Development	8,944	21,614	30,558	34.5	47.1	42.5
Human and Social Studies	228	569	797	0.9	1.2	1.1
Law, Military Science and Security	1,301	1,249	2,550	5.0	2.7	3.6
Services and Life Sciences	129	238	367	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Non-STEM Fields	17,509	34,417	51,926	67.6	75.0	72.3
Total	25,901	45,919	71,820	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Technology and Innovation 2024

14. Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes

This section provides an analysis of the progress made in the areas of violence against women; human rights of women; women and the media and the girl child. During the period under review, progress has been noted in areas such as the reviewing of laws; research and policy development; provision of services and coordination of national initiatives.

14.1 Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a violation of human rights as entrenched in the Namibian Constitution's Article 8(1), which states that *"the dignity of all persons shall be inviolable,"* and Article 10, which stipulates that *"All persons shall be equal before the law,"* and that *"No persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status"*. In Namibia, violence against women and girls persists despite the legal provision. For instance, in 2022, the Namibian Police Force, recorded 5 356 GBV related cases perpetrated against women and girls of which 1 378 accounts for rape cases.

According to the National Gender Baseline Study, the most common forms of GBV include sexual abuse and domestic violence. Common drivers to GBV includes, unequal relations between women and men, poverty, alcohol abuse, unemployment, and negative cultural practices such as child marriage. National initiatives were implemented during the review period to address GBV such as integration of GBV messages into Nationhood-National pride campaign, national mass media campaign in local languages, commemoration of 16 days of activism against GBV, implementation of the National GBV plan of Action 2019-2023 through the National Gender Coordination Mechanism, implementation of male engagement programme including hosting of National Male Conferences in different regions,

capacity building of key service providers (Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, teachers, social workers, healthcare officers, law enforcement officers).

14.2 Measures to prevent Violence against Girls in Education Sector

The government of the Republic of Namibia continues to acknowledge the value of Life Skills as a subject in the fight against GBV and Violence against Children in the education system. Senior Primary Curriculum (Grades 4-7) includes topics such as HIV & AIDS; Gender and Sex; Gender-based violence; Learner pregnancy and Trafficking in Persons. Similarly, the Junior Secondary Curriculum (Grades 8 & 9) covers subjects such as GBV; Freedom of speech; Sexual harassment; Sexual abuse; Baby dumping, and Intergenerational sex. Moreover, Senior Secondary Syllabus (Grades 10 & 11) covers topics such as: teenage pregnancy, responsible parenthood; sexual abuse, etc. In addition, Higher Education Institutions have policies and code of conducts geared towards rooting out sexual harassment in the sector, both within students, staff, and staff to students. Sexual harassment is an offence punishable by law in Namibia.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is provided through Life Skills subject. Although there was an increase in the percentage of schools that provided Life Skills-Based HIV and Sexuality Education from 76.2 percent in 2019 to 95.5 percent in 2020, another drop was recorded in 2021 at 78.1 percent. In 2020, 31 462 (21 044 female and 10 418 male) teachers were trained in life skills-based HIV and sexuality education. While in 2021, 32 003 (21 638 female and 10 365 male) teachers were trained. In 2022, 32 465 (22 096 female and 10 369 male) teachers were trained. Moreover, out of 466 456 young people aged 10-24 reached life through generic skills-based HIV and Sexuality Education in 2022, while 466 641 were reached through Sexual reproductive Health and 472 814 were reached through transmission and prevention.

Challenges

- Limited number of psycho-social specialists including psychologists, social workers and counselors especially in remote and rural areas
- Negative cultural practices that perpetuate GBV and VAC especially child marriage
- Absence of an integrated GBV and VAC Information Management System

15. Actions Prioritized to Address GBV, TIP and VAC

15.1. Gender Based Violence Laws

During the period under review, the government of the Republic of Namibia and its stakeholders remain committed to implementing laws aimed at addressing violence against women and girls and has taken measures to address violence against women and girls. During the period under review, Namibia amended and promulgated new legislations to ensure alignment with international instruments on gender equality. These include:

- Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022);
This Act has come into operation as of the 15th day of May 2024-(Government Gazette No. 8365 of 15 May 2024);
- Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022);
This Act has come into operation as of the 15th day of May 2024- (Government Gazette No. 8365 of 15 May 2024)

In addition, the government continues to implement other existing legislations. These include:

- Witness Protection Act, 2017 (Act No. 11 of 2017): The Witness Protection Act, 2017, (Act No. 11 of 2017) commencement notice was published in the Government Gazette of 31 August 2023, in terms of which the Act was operationalized as of 1st September 2023. The Ministry of Justice has established a Witness Protection Unit. The function of the unit is to formulate regulations, policies, agreements and to oversee all operational activities to ensure full implementation of the said Act.
- Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015), under review came into force on 30 January 2019 by GN 4/2019 (GG 6829)
- Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 (Act No 1 of 2018), came into force on 14 November 2019 by GN 335/2019 (GG 7047)
- Labour Act, 2007 (Act No. 11 of 2007)

Furthermore, services are available at GBV Protection Units under the Namibian Police Force aimed at providing services to GBV survivors and their families. These Units are in all 14 regions and offer different services, ranging from psychosocial support, investigation, legal services and medical care. The National GBV toll free numbers are 10111 and 106. The government through the MGEPSW provides subsidies to Non-Governmental Organisations to provide services to survivors of GBV, VAC and TIP victims. The government has nine shelters for survivors of GBV, VAC and TIP victims in eight regions.

15.2 National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action

The prioritized National Plan of Action on GBV 2019-2023 was implemented through the GBV and Human Rights Cluster of the National Gender Coordination Mechanism during the period under review. The GBV and Human Rights cluster serves to provide technical support for the implementation of the National Plan of Action on GBV and it's made up of different stakeholders including OMAs, Academia, CSOs, NGOs, FBOs and development partners. To assess the effectiveness of this Plan of Action, the government and stakeholders are in the process to review and develop a new plan. Moreover, the government is at the final stage of conducting a study on the Economic Cost of GBV in Namibia.

The government through the MGEPSW also developed a five-year Roadmap the Namibia: National Plan of Action (2021-2025) to prevent and respond to violence against children during the review period. This National Plan of Action represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help prevent violence against children in Namibia. These strategies include strengthening the policy and legislative environment, changing social norms to support parents and teachers and promote positive parenting; enhancing parenting skills to promote healthy child development; income and economic support to families, response services to lessen harms and prevent future risk and providing life skills and education early in life.

15.3. Addressing Trafficking in women and Girls

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a severe violation of human rights which requires special attention and specific actions to support the victims. One of the defining characteristics of this phenomenon is that the plight of the victim does not end with the termination of the trafficking situation. During the period

under review, Namibia developed the National Action Plan on Combating of Trafficking in Persons 2023-2027 which is based on the four pillars (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership).

During the period under review, 95 cases of Trafficking in Persons were recorded by the Namibian Police Force. The Namibian Police Force has recorded 46 TIP cases, 28 cases are prosecuted of which 11 are finalized and 17 are on court roll. 17 cases are still under investigation and did not appear in court yet while one was sent for the Prosecutor General's Decision.

During the period under review, the following measures have been taken:

- Training for Community Liaison Officers on basic concepts, National Referral Mechanism and its Standard Operating Procedures and the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 (Act No. 1 of 2018).
- The Combating of Trafficking in Parsons's Plan of Action 2023-2028 was launched in 2023.
- The MGEPSW and stakeholders continue to raise awareness on GBV and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) through community meetings, commemoration of international and national days such as TIP, 10 December and 16 Days of Activism.
- In 2021-2022 eight state-owned shelters, situated in the Zambezi, Kavango East, Ohangwena, Omusati, Kunene, Khomas, Hardap and //Kharas regions were operational.
- To date, 295 survivors and victims of violence against children; GBV and TIP were accommodated at the shelters across the country. A strict case management process is in place from admission, until when the survivor or victim is discharged.
- Numerous training by the Namibian Police Force for front office members and CID on the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act. 1 of 2018 and basic TIP information
- Training of 80 social workers on the assessment and response to TIP victims.
- The Namibian Police Force in collaboration with United Nations Office on Drugs and crime Regional Office for Southern Africa trained eighteen (18) investigating officers and nine (9) prosecutors on: International and national frame works on TIP and Smuggling of Migrants and other related topics including but not limited to the indicators of TIP and Smuggling of Migrant and the use of fraudulent traveling documents.
- 372 males and females Namibian Police Force front-line officers were trained on the TIP legislation (the Act, Definition, Identification, Referral and Prevention measures).
- 320 males and females Namibian Police Force investigators and detectives under Criminal Investigations Directorate were trained on TIP legislation and investigative techniques.
- 88 males and females stakeholders from NAMPOL, City Police Victim Support Unit, MHSS, MGEPSW, Magistrates, Public Prosecutors, Namport Officials, Life line/Child line Namibia were trained on TIP legislation, National Referral Mechanism and Standard Operational Procedures on TIP.

16, 17 and 18. Prevention and Response to Violence against Women and Girls Facilitated by Technology: Online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images

Namibia has amended and promulgated legislations to address GBV and VAC. These include the Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022) and Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022). The government continues to implement the National campaign on GBV and VAC through the implementation of the prioritized National Plan of Action on GBV (2019-2023) and the National Training Manual and Resource Kit on GBV. The focus is to put survivors first and stimulate a culture of care amongst families, communities and institutions which promotes early help-seeking to prevent or limit harm. The government continues to raise awareness on GBV prevention and response to targeting community members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders.

Additionally, in order to encourage greater participation from men in safe motherhood, fatherhood initiatives, family planning, reaching boys and young men, promoting positive gender norms and positive change, and covering men's sexual and reproductive health, the government continues to strengthen and implement the male engagement program. In order to combat toxic masculinity and the harmful social norms that support gender-based violence, Namibia successfully organized three National Men Conferences in collaboration with civil society throughout the review period and through this program, bringing together over 3300 men from various regions. Furthermore, this initiative consistently raises awareness in all regions about the role that males may play in preventing HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence.

Moreover, the government with all the stakeholder implemented the recommendation of the National Formative Study on Child Marriage launched in 2020, and various programmed aimed at addressing violence against Children. Namibia is in the process to develop a National Strategy on Child Marriage.

Namibia also implemented the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy for Education developed in 2007. This policy aims to promote literacy and encourages women and girl's participation in the new economies and societies arising from ICT related developments. In 2022, Namibia passed the Access to Information law that aims to promote free access to information from public and private entities. Namibia is also implementing the National Cybersecurity and Awareness Strategy to protect citizens from cybercrimes. In addition, Namibia signed the Global Alliance "We Protect" commitment aiming at protecting children against online-sexual abuse and exploitation. More so, the Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) installed ICT infrastructure as part of the laptop and data connectivity devices initiative at the various institutions of higher learning targeting needy students.

In 2020, the Internet Society Namibia Chapter in partnership with the Web Foundation launched Namibia's Women Rights Online, which set out to assess the gender divide, relevant content online and women empowerment 26, using specifically designed 14 indicators across the following 5 categories which includes: Internet Access and Women Empowerment, Affordability, Digital Skills and Education, Relevant Content and Services for Women, and online Safety.

The Disrupting Harm online child sexual exploitation (OCSEA) study was conducted in 2022. The study yields quality evidence on OCSEA, which is assisting Namibia in creating further evidence-based

laws and policies to keep our children safe. It provided a set of concrete recommendations for various sectors and stakeholders, including policymakers, law enforcement, civil society, and communities. NAMPOL, and MGEPSW have started rolling out training for Police Officers and Social Workers on how to identify and support OCSEA victims.

Namibia creates awareness on Violence against Women and Girls Facilitated by Technology through the commemoration of the annual Safer Internet Day (SID). Safer Internet Day (SID) is an annual event that takes place on February 11, aimed at promoting safe and responsible use of digital technology among children, young people, parents, community members and the general public.

20. Measures to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and gender bias in the media

In the period under review, the MGEPSW conducted media training for 34 media practitioners in various media houses on GBV and the National Resource Kit on GBV. The aim was to provide more information on GBV and other related issues to media houses from all 14 regions in the country. The said training also aimed at strengthening the capacity to confidently engage in GBV dialogues. The training also provided capacity on gender sensitive reporting, coverage and prevention of negative portrayal of women in the media.

21. Action to Address Violence against Marginalized Groups of Women - The Girl Child

During the period under review the Education, Girl and Boy Child Cluster as part of the National Gender Coordination Mechanism implemented activities aimed at addressing issues affecting the boy and girl child such as GBV and VAC. This implementation helps to monitor the participation and increased access of women to vocational training, science and technology as well as promote enrolment of boys in disciplines that they are hugely under-represented such as nursing, social work and the hospitality sectors.

The MGEPSW in collaboration with key stakeholders implemented the legal engagement programmes with various traditional authorities, especially the Ovaherero and Ovambo marginalised communities living in the remote areas of the Kunene Region. These programmes focus specifically on awareness creation on GBV and harmful cultural practices as child marriage that perpetuate GBV and Violence Against Women and Children and services that are available towards the combating of GBV among communities. During the period under review, the Ministry through Regional Offices also reached out to Persons with Disabilities on GBV prevention and response.

PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

22. Measures taken to promote women's participation in public life and decision making

The Republic of Namibia's Government is dedicated to advancing women's empowerment, gender equality, and participation of women in politics and decision-making. During the period under review, the government through the MGEPSW in collaboration with IDEA International conducted various sensitization workshops for women in Politics and Decision-making positions on the democratic processes including law making processes, gender related issues, Gender Responsive Budgeting and Gender Based Violence.

In addition, following the official launch of the gender equality in politics project in April 2023, a set of activities was organized jointly by the Parliament of Namibia and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in June and August 2023, namely targeted support activities for female MPs and capacity-building workshops on gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). These activities include:

- Training by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on Public Speaking and Advocacy for female MPs in Oshakati on 24th–28th July 2023, attended by 14 female MPs and 6 staff members.
- Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Responsive Budgeting held on 14th–18th August 2023 in Swakopmund attended by 30 MPs and 8 staff members.
- Capacity Building Workshop for Women in Politics and Decision Making held on 26th– 29th October 2023.
- Workshop on promoting women’s participation in the upcoming 2024 Presidential and National Assembly general elections and the 2025 Regional Council and Local Authority Elections, held on 01st–02nd March 2024. Capacity building on resource mobilisation for active political participation and overcoming challenges, utilisation of electronic media for political purposes, understanding MPs’ roles in combating GBV and promoting mental health held on 26 February 2024 - 01 March 2024, in Durban, South Africa.

Female and Male Representation in Parliament of the Republic of Namibia

Table 16: Female and male representation in the National Assembly 2019-2024

Year	Total number of MPs	Male	Female	Percentage of female Representation
2019	104	56	48	46.0
2020	104	58	46	44.0
2021	104	58	46	44.0
2022	104	56	48	46.0
2023	104	54	50	48.0
2024	104	51	53	51.0

Table 17: Female Representation in the National Council

Year	Total Number of MPs	Male	Female	Percentage of Female Representation
2019	42	32	10	24.0
2020	42	36	6	14.3
2021	42	36	6	14.3
2022	42	36	6	14.3
2023	42	36	6	14.3
2024	42	36	6	14.3

Source: Parliament 2024

Table 18: Women Participation in Politic and Decision Making

Indicator	2023
Women in Politics	
Total number of Seats/Positions of Ministers & Deputy Ministers	39
<i>Number of Seats of Ministers & Deputy Ministers held by Women</i>	21
Total number of Ambassadors	34
<i>Number of Ambassadors who are Women</i>	9
Women in Management Positions in the Public Sector	
Total number of Positions of Executive Directors	36
<i>Number of positions of Executive Directors held by Women</i>	11
Total number of positions of Deputy Executive Directors	132
<i>Number of positions of Deputy Executive Directors held by Women</i>	22
Total number of Directors in Public Sector	321
<i>Number of Directors in Public Sector held by Women</i>	76

Source: MGEPEW 2024

23. Measures to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision making in the media

During the period under review, Namibia implemented the provisions of Article 21 of the Namibian Constitution 1990. Namibia's legal and regulatory framework provides significant protection for freedom of expression for all citizens, specifically women and freedom of the media. Data collected by MICT from Media Houses show that 54 percent of decision-making positions in media houses were occupied by women as of 2022.²⁶ More so, MHETI in collaboration with the Namibia NSFAP installed ICT infrastructure as part of the laptop and data connectivity devices initiative at various institutions of higher learning targeting needy students especially females. In 2020, the Internet Society Namibia Chapter in partnership with the Web Foundation launched Namibia’s Women Rights Online, which set out to assess the gender divide, relevant content online and women empowerment, using specifically designed 14 indicators across the following 5 categories which includes: Internet Access and Women Empowerment, Affordability, Digital Skills and Education, Relevant Content and Services for Women, and Online Safety.

²⁶ MICT

24. National Women's Machinery (exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women)

MGEPEWS is established to create and promote sustainable socio-economic development opportunities for the attainment of gender equality and well-being of children. This Ministry is further required to ensure gender equality and equitable socio-economic development of women and men and the wellbeing of children. The MGEPEWS is mandated to ensure gender equality, poverty eradication and socio-economic development of targeted groups. The Ministry is headed by a female cabinet Minister, 2 female Deputy Ministers, 1 male Deputy Minister and a female Executive Director. For the 2024/2025 Financial Year (FY), the MGEPEWS was allocated 10.0 percent of the total national budget compared to a 9.0 percent in the 2023/2024 FY. These indicated 1.0 percent increase in budget allocation to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

25. Mechanism and tools used to mainstream gender across sectors

During the period under review, Namibia developed a Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) curriculum for Members of Parliament (MPs) and civil servants. The curriculum aimed to strengthen capacity for gender mainstreaming and GRPB for all Offices, Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) and ensure compliance to the Cabinet directive on GRPB. The Ministry also implemented the GRPB guidelines as well as the customized SADC gender mainstreaming toolkit. During the period under review, the MGEPEWS also used the roadmap for GRPB to strengthen the capacity of O/M/As on GRPB. The GRPB checklist was also utilized to conduct GRPB analysis in OMAS. Namibia has Gender Focal Points in all O/M/As responsible for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in their specific sectors. Furthermore, Namibia has a functional coordination mechanism for the effective implementation of the National Gender Policy.

Lessons learned:

- GRPB tools help to track implementation of gender mainstreaming and GRPB.
- Incorporation of the GRPB in the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprise (MoFPE) budget call circular ensures compliance to the Cabinet Directive on GRPB.

26. National Human rights institution

Namibia has the Office of the Ombudsman which is an independent and impartial public office bearer who raises all people's concerns with the government institutions, bodies, and civil servants as well as any company or private individuals in Namibia, in relation to violation of human rights and protection of the environment. The Office of the Ombudsman, together with the Office of the Inspector General of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) are tasked to impartially investigate all allegations of human right violations and ill treatment by state organs as well as private entities and all individuals in general. In order to ensure access to the public, several offices were established and are functional in various regions. They are responsible for the awareness creation of the function and services offered by the Office of the Ombudsman. Apart from the Office of the Ombudsman, there is also the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) that is responsible for collectively striving to make laws accessible to those with the least access, through education, law reform, research, litigation, legal advice, representation and lobbying, with the ultimate aim of creating and maintaining a human rights culture in Namibia.

PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

27, 28, 29. Action to Build and Sustain Peace, measures taken to increase leadership representation, and participation of women in peace building, Action to enhance Judicial and non-Judicial Accountability

Namibia continues to implement the National Plan of Action on Women Peace and Security 2019-2024. The implementation of this plan action is coordinated under the existing National Gender Coordination Mechanism. To increase the representation and meaningful participation of women in National Security institutions, the government reviewed the recruitment ratio, which now stands at 20.0 percent female and 80.0 percent male. Women in the Namibian Defense Force (NDF) also stands at 26.0 percent²⁷. During the period under review, the Namibia Correctional Services (NCS) identified and trained 48 female Correctional Officers and created a database for qualified female Correctional Officers to participate in international peace operations. In addition, 35.0 percent of Correctional Officers were trained in peacekeeping missions. During the review period, 20.0 percent of females were deployed in peacekeeping missions. In the NCS, there are 43.0 percent women in leadership positions. In 2023, 42 female Correctional Officers were trained in leadership skills.

During the period under review, female representation stood at 25.0 percent in key positions in the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL). The Namibian Police Force is in the process of developing the sector Sexual Harassment Policy. In addition, 34 Unit Commanders, 216 general Police officers, 18 prosecutors, 18 magistrates, were trained on National Referral Mechanism and Standard Operating Procedures on GBV and TIP.

30. Measures to eliminate discrimination against and violation of rights of the girl Child

Namibia has amended and promulgated legislations to address Gender Based Violence and Violence against Children. These include the Combating of Rape Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 4 of 2022), Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015, Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 1 of 2018, Labour Act 11 of 2007 and Combating of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 6 of 2022). Government continues to implement the National campaign on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence against Children (VAC) through the implementation of the prioritized National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence (2019-2023) and the National Training Manual and Resource Kit on Gender-Based Violence.

Moreover, the government with the relevant stakeholders has implemented the recommendation of the National Formative Study on Child Marriage launched in 2020, and various programmed aimed at addressing violence against children. This has been achieved through the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, with an establishment of 17 Gender-Based Violence Protection Units, in 14 regions to provide services to survivors of GBV. In addition, through the MGEPSW, nine (9) government shelters in eight (8) regions and two (2) private shelters were established are subsidised by the government. At the units above, MGEPSW provides psycho-social support services; the Namibian Police provides protection services; while the MoHSS provides care and treatment services.

Combating violence against children is one of the top priorities of the Namibian Government. There is political will and commitment to protect our most vulnerable members of society, our children. By

²⁷ 2023 MODVA Analysis Report

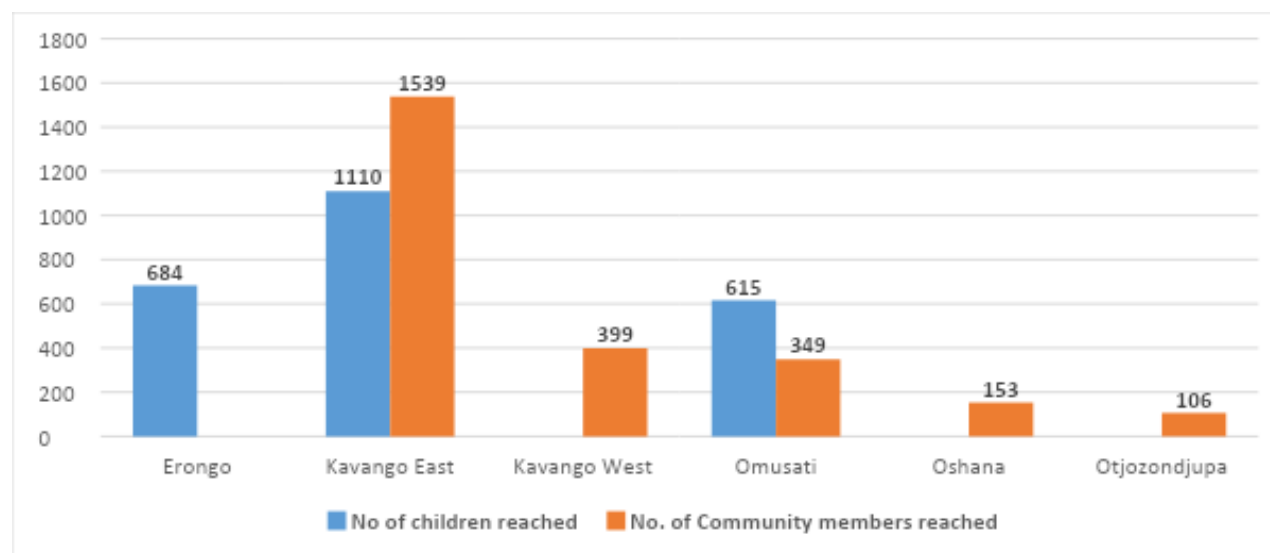
becoming a Pathfinding Country, the Government of the Republic of Namibia continues to show the joint commitment by all key Ministries Namibia developed a 5-year Roadmap the Namibia: National Plan of Action (2021-2025) to prevent and respond to Violence Against Children during the review period.

This national plan of Action represents a select group of strategies based on the best available evidence to help prevent violence against children in Namibia. These strategies include strengthening the policy and legislative environment, changing social norms to support parents and teachers and promote positive parenting; enhancing parenting skills to promote healthy child development; income and economic support to families, response services to lessen harms and prevent future risk and providing life skills and education early in life.

In 2019, the MGEPEWSW, the National Statistics Agency (NSA), International Training & Education Centre for Health (ITECH) and Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through U.S President Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), conducted the 1st National Violence Against Children Survey. The survey revealed that 39.6 percent of females and 45.0 percent of males aged 18-24 have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence in childhood. Cases of violence against children, including abuse, neglect, domestic violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, including online grooming, that have been reported to the authorities, investigated and prosecuted and include information on the sanctions imposed on the perpetrators.

In addition, the government through the MGEPEWSW conducts Sensitization campaigns on VAC and TIP. This activity entails an awareness campaign on VAC, and TIP among children, parents, caregivers and community members at large. During this reporting period, this activity was implemented in some regions as indicated in figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Number of Children and Adults reached through sensitization meetings on VAC and TIP by region (July-September 2023)



Source: MGEPEWSW report 2024

31. Measures taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns in environmental policies

31.1. Implementations of Cabinet resolution on GRPB

During the review period, Namibia continues to implement Cabinet resolutions Decision No. 2nd/11.03.14/007 on Gender Responsive Planning Budgeting by ensuring that all O/M/As implements

GRPB initiatives. Furthermore, GRPB has been integrated into the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprise budget circular for 2023/24- 2025/26 Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

31.2. Capacity Building on GRPB

To enhance capacity for O/M/As, gender focal points, those in the environmental sector and regional councils, the MGEPEWSW conducted trainings on GRPB guidelines. In 2023/2024, the training was attended by 54 people (46 females and 8 males). In addition, the government developed the GRPB curriculum for Members of Parliament and Civil Servants to improve gender mainstreaming and gender responsive, planning and budgeting capacity. During the review period, 70 people (40 females and 30 male) staff members from all Regional Councils were trained on GRPB.

31.3. Gender integration in environmental policies

During the review period, gender concerns were mainstreamed in the Drought Management Policy and Strategy, as well as the Environmental Investment Fund Programmes. Moreover, gender has been integrated into existing national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and structures during the 2021/2022. In Namibia, gender is prioritized in all National Disaster Management Policies and initiatives²⁸. Gender has also been mainstreamed in the Namibia Water Sector Support Programme (NWSSP).

In 2023, the Government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform (MAWLR), embarked on a gender audit at local and national level for Namibia Water Sector Support Program supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB). The overall goal was to conduct the gender audit, mainstreaming at local and national levels for the Namibia Water Sector Support Program (NWSSP), and guide the MAWLR in the implementation of gender programmes, with gender identified as one of the priority cross-cutting issue themes to be mainstreamed into the programme implementation strategy. The overarching aim was to ensure principles that foster gender equality and women's empowerment are systematically infused and entrenched in all aspects of the program.

Moreover, the MGEPEWSW conducted a Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting analysis of six O/M/As in 2023/2024. These include, Ministry of Mines and Energy (Vote 15), Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises (Vote 9), Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (Vote 36), Ministry of Defense and Veterans Affairs (Vote 8), Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (Vote 11), and Ministry of Works and Transport (Vote 23 and 24)²⁹.

Lesson learned

- Implementation of GRPB promotes better utilization of resources by matching budgets to priorities of the county and ensures that the needs of women and men, girls and boys are addressed;
- Capacity building for all O/M/As is paramount for Gender Mainstreaming and GRPB initiatives to move forward;
- In addition to the existing political will, technical will needs to be developed and strengthened by raising awareness on GRB, strengthening the coordination mechanism and creating a critical mass

²⁸ *Third Biennial Report on the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa 2024*

²⁹ *MGEPEWSW, GRPB Analysis report 2023/24*

of actors in the country to carry forward gender budgeting sustainably so that gender equality and women's empowerment are strengthened in the country.

32. Measures taken integrate gender into disaster risk reduction

In Namibia, gender is prioritized in all National Disaster Management policies³⁰. The National Gender Policy (2010) provides a framework for mainstreaming gender throughout government programmes and initiatives, including disaster management. Equally, the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2009) also explicitly recognizes the essence of addressing the differential impacts of disasters on both men and women. Although subject to review, the DRM Policy calls for inclusion of gender analysis in all disaster risk management activities. To this effect, gender concerns are mainstreamed in the draft revised Drought Management Policy and Strategy, as well as the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia (EIF) programmes. For instance, the EIF conducted numerous Training of Trainers (ToTs) sessions on disaster risk reduction in the Kunene Region which is highly vulnerable to impacts of climate change. The training was undertaken as part of the support provided by IREMA Kunene Project with the aim to enhance capacity of trainers of trainees (Extension Officers) in DRR who in turn are expected to assist smallholder farmers, farmers' groups and their members in Kunene Region to enhance their resilience to social, economic, environmental and climate risks and shocks. Moreover, gender has also been mainstreamed in the Namibia Water Sector Support Programme (NWSSP).

The National Disaster Risk Management Policy³¹ from 2009 recognizes that “gender relations affect how people experience disasters” and that mainstreaming gender in disaster risk management is critical to disaster risk management implementation. It highlights the importance of “fully considering and integrating the concerns of women and men in policies and programmes to prevent and mitigate disasters”:

“Enhancing gender aspects involves increasing women's participation in disaster risk reduction to improve their chances of survival and their resilience to livelihood risks. It also involves balancing the entitlements and responsibilities of both males and females in the disaster risk reduction process. The parameters must be changed in order to significantly and equitably change women's options and opportunities by ensuring equality of opportunity and of outcomes in disaster reduction interventions”³².

The Policy also identifies a number of special measures for Reproductive Health (RH) including HIV/AIDS and gender components during relief and recovery operations highlighting that women in particular have special reproductive health needs during disasters. It is also pointed out that during disasters women and girls may lack access to health services, particularly reproductive health services.

The Policy lists the below Reproductive Health and HIV/Aids and Gender issues, which must be taken into consideration especially when communities are displaced and are relocated to camps:

³⁰ *Third Biennial Report on the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa 2024*

³¹ Government of Namibia (2009) *National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2009)*. Available here: <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/nam169289.pdf>

³² *ibid*

- engaging the involvement of women in camp management and in the organization, coordination and the distribution of food;
- training of humanitarian workers, security and police officers, defense personnel and humanitarian workers on GBV; raising awareness on the different forms of GBV and providing information on how to access care should the need arise;
- ensuring the presence of a protection officer on site (for example training a volunteer to raise awareness on the problem and work with the authorities to identify measures to prevent GBV but also to be at the forefront of assistance to survivors);
- providing psychosocial care to cater for victims of violence as well as to help those affected to cope with the difficulties posed by life in the camp environment; and
- providing RH kits such as hygiene kits, contraceptive kits, male and female condoms, delivery kits for pregnant women and for the birth attendants.

The Policy also emphasizes that during disaster situations, it is vital to gather information on the number of people affected by location, age groups and gender. In terms of mechanisms to enhance disaster risk management knowledge management in school curricula in Namibia, the Policy reiterates the need to “ensure equal access to appropriate training and educational opportunities for women and vulnerable constituencies; promote gender and cultural sensitivity training as integral components of education and training for disaster risk reduction.”

Namibia is implementing the National Strategy for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into Development Planning in Namibia 2017-2021. The Strategy recognizes the impacts of climate change and human-induced environmental degradation, particularly of marginal areas, and their contribution to the increased burden on women and children (especially girls). To further curb disaster impacts, the Government of the Republic of Namibia launched a national awareness and communication strategy on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Strategy in 2023 which strongly advocates for awareness raising for DRM and empowering communities to advocate for DRR interventions at all levels of government.

SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

33. National Strategy or Action Plan on Gender Equality

Namibia is in the process of finalizing its third National Gender Equality and Equity Policy which is aligned to international, continental, and regional instruments, protocols and conventions on gender equality, women empowerment, and human rights that Namibia has ratified or committed to as well as those of the country's Constitution, legal framework, Vision 2030, and National Development Plans.

The goal of the Policy is to reduce all forms of gender discrimination, GBV, and gender inequalities in all spheres of life in Namibia leading to a gender-just society where women, men, girls and boys, Persons with Disabilities and Marginalised Communities, enjoy equal rights and live freely, in dignity, have equal access to opportunities, resources and participate equally and fully in the socio-economic development of the country.

34. Country Systems for Tracking Proportion of National Budget that is invested in Promoting Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (Gender-Responsive Budgeting)

During the period under review, Namibia tracked the resources allocated to Gender Equality and women's empowerment. The MGEPEWSW was allocated 9.5 percent of the total Government budget for 2024/25. For the financial year 2024/25, the MGEPEWSW allocated 0.36 percent of the total ministerial budget to the promotion of gender equality programmes. Moreover, the Ministry conducts gender responsive budgeting analysis of various O/M/As. In 2023/24, 6 Ministries were analyzed. These include; Ministry of Mines and Energy (Vote 15), Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises (Vote 9), Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare (Vote 36), Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (Vote 8), Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (Vote 11), and Ministry of Works and Transport (Vote 23 and 24).

35. Mechanisms for Different Stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of Beijing Declaration

Through the MGEPEWSW, Namibia continues to implement the National Coordination Mechanism which ensures participation with different stakeholders specifically Civil Society organization, FBOs, Academia, Private Sector and Development partners at National, Regional and Constituency levels with the implementation and monitoring of the National Gender Equality and Equality Policy in line with SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, African Union Agenda 2030 and BPfA and gender programmes and activities at community level.

36. Stakeholder participation in the drafting of the country report

Namibia undertook a comprehensive national-level process of review towards the production of the country report in collaboration with all branches of the government, civil society organizations, private sector, entities of the development partners, academia, and the media. An inter-ministerial committee, as well as a national consultative committee, was also constituted to analyze official documents, published reports, and research findings, information which was collected and validated towards the country report.

37. Action Plan and Timeline for Implementation of the Recommendations of the CEDAW

In 2023, the Namibian Cabinet directed the MGEPEWSW to coordinate with other key stakeholders and develop an implementation plan to implement the recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In August 2023, government through the MGEPEWSW, convened a stakeholder's consultative workshop to draft the action plan on the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee on the CEDAW. However, the implementation plan with time is yet to be finalised.

37.1. National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

This action area focused on accelerating the adoption of an updated National Gender Policy and National Human Rights Action Plan and ensuring their effective implementation through adequate resource allocation and coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels.

37.3. Stereotypes and harmful practices

To address harmful practices, the government through the MGEPEWSW conducted the National Formative Study on Child Marriage in 2020. The government and stakeholders are in the process of implementing the recommendations including the development of the National strategy on Child Marriage.

37.4. Violence against women

To improve access to protection orders, victim reparations, shelters and offering psychosocial support services and counselling for women and girls, Law enforcement especially those deployed at the GBV Protective Units have been trained. Community support groups and male engagement programmes have been strengthened and awareness-raising at different levels. Capacity-building for health care workers, police officers, professionals in the judiciary and civil society organizations have been conducted on preventing and responding to cases of GBV, VAC and TIP. GBV is incorporated in the curriculum for the Namibian Police Force Training Manual.

37.5. Trafficking in Persons

The costed National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons 2023-2027 has been launched and in the process of implementation. Capacity-building key service providers such as law enforcement and Social Workers on the early identification of victims of trafficking and their referral to appropriate services have been conducted.

Awareness campaigns aimed at encouraging reporting of trafficking in women and girls, especially in the tourism industry and through online recruitment have been intensified. Several TIP cases have been successfully investigated and prosecuted.

SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

38. Gender statistics

During the review period, the government through the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) continues to implement the Statistics Act of 2011 (Act No. 9 of 2011) which mandates the NSA to collect official statistics sensitive to distribution by gender, disability, region, or similar socio-economic features. Namibia conducted the 2023 Population & Housing Census which made use of disaggregated data by sex, region, age, and disability. Furthermore, the Education Information Management System, Health Information Management System have gender indicators. Gender sensitive data was used in the development of the National Gender Equality and Equity Policy.

Moreover, the Namibia Statistics Agency has established the Leave No-One-Behind (LNOB) Standards, which facilitate the comparability and disaggregation of statistics. These standards enable the extraction, analysis, and comparison of gender-specific data based on the included variables. Officially gazetted in 2020, these standards have since been incorporated into all data collection efforts, ensuring that gender-specific variables are consistently and comprehensively addressed. Other disaggregation include; Age, Sex, Geographic location of usual residence (U/R, Region, Constituency), Citizenship, Type of citizenship, National ID documents (Birth certificate, IDs), Albinism, Functionality, Ethnicity, Education levels, Marital status and Orphanhood. An example of these standards being applied is our recently concluded Population and Housing Census, 2023.

39. Country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics

The Namibia Statistics Agency hosts a dedicated department for Data Quality Assurance and NSS Coordination. This department spearheaded the development of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) standard through a two-phase process: initial consultations with the Technical Working Group (TWG) and subsequent validation at a national workshop. Officially gazetted in 2020, this standard is mandated for all data producers within the National Statistical System (NSS). The LNOB tool enhances the comparability and disaggregation of statistics, aligning with the Agenda 2030 principle. It establishes standardized questions and definitions for national data collection tools, ensuring consistency with international best practices.

- These standards support data generation of quality, disaggregated, comparable data.
- Ensures that all population groups (e.g. GBV victims or perpetrators) can be described by national data for improved interventions

Thus, strengthening national gender statistics remains one of our key priorities, even though the LNOB standards were developed for all statistics produced within the country. Another major priority is capacity building within the National Statistics System. This includes the ongoing socialization of the LNOB standard, as demonstrated in activities like the 2023 Census. Additionally, standing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Other Ministries and Agencies (OMAs) are focused on enhancing capacity in data collection, processing, and analysis. The Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) also supports the implementation of the X-road data exchange initiative, which facilitates the sharing of government administrative data.

39.1. Country's priorities for the next 5 years to strengthen National gender statistics

- MoHSS in collaboration with the NSA to conduct the Demographic Health Survey (DHS);
- Propose amendment to the existing Law on statistics to include gender components;
- Review the Gender Policy coordination mechanism to amend room for the establishment of the interagency structure on Gender statistics;
- Capacity on Gender Statistics NSA;
- MGEPEWSW to participate in the development of data collection tools for the DHS;

40. Gender specific indicators prioritised for monitoring progress on the SDGs

Namibia, like many other nations, has based its national development goals on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a special emphasis on gender equality and women empowerment. These indicators are incorporated into Namibia's national development strategies and monitoring frameworks, highlighting the significance of gender data in policymaking and national development planning. Such indicators include:

- (i) The proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly and National Council: This indicator reflects women's political engagement and decision-making authority in Namibia, which supports the aims of SDG 5.5.
- (ii) Proportion of women in managerial positions: Monitoring the representation of women in leadership roles within the public and private sectors is vital for assessing gender equality in employment, which fits the SDG 5.5.
- (iii) Gender-Based Violence Prevalence: Namibia collects data on gender-based violence, including domestic violence, which is critical for SDG 5.2. To address and reduce these issues, the country has established legal frameworks and policies such as the Gender-Based Violence Protection Units.
- (iv) Maternal mortality ratio: Under SDG 3.1, Namibia monitors maternal health outcomes with the goal of lowering maternal mortality and ensuring universal access to reproductive health care services.
- (v) The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel: This indicator (part of SDGs 3.1 and 3.7) is critical for lowering maternal mortality and improving health outcomes for mothers and babies.
- (vi) Gender discrepancies in primary, secondary, and higher education enrollment and completion rates: Education equality is a key area that supports SDG 4, with a particular emphasis on gender disparities in educational results.
- (vii) Adolescent birth rate: This indicator, linked to SDG 3.7, helps monitor reproductive health and rights, with a special emphasis on minimizing adolescent pregnancies, which have an impact on girls' educational and economic chances.
- (viii) Employment-to-population ratio by sex: This indicator helps assess economic participation and job opportunities for women compared to men, relevant to SDG 8.

Challenges and recommendations

- **Challenge 1:** Fragmented Data Systems for GBV data collection efforts

- **Recommendation 1:** Digital tool X-road data exchange platform to address fragmentation & LNOB standard will ensure comparability of data.
- **Challenge 2:** Outdated data (e.g. DHS, NAMWAYS) and lack of targeted surveys
- **Recommendation 2:** NSA Strategic Plan 2023- 2027 focuses on improvement of quality and use of administrative data sources.
- **Challenge 3:** The major challenges Namibia has as a country is outdated data sources as well as administrative data which is still in paper format.
- **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen the use of data science applications to support data producers.

Strategies for the next five years on gender statistics

- MoHSS in collaboration with the NSA to conduct the Namibia Demographic Health Survey (DHS)
- Include the establishment of the interagency committee on gender statistics in the existing National Gender Policy Coordination Mechanism to be chaired by National Statistics Agency

SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

It is worth noting that Namibia made significant progress in addressing gender inequality and closing gender gaps. These accomplishments serve as a springboard to meet goals in the remaining important areas while also preserving the gains made thus as to prevent regression. They are inspiring to the leadership and the country as a whole.

The EMIS statistics for the period under review revealed that more Namibian boys than girls dropped out of primary and secondary education because of failing at school, discipline problems, feeling old, going to work and because of parental demands that they leave school. As such, there is a need to increase boys' survival and promotion rates, to reduce boys' school leaving rates, reduce boys' failure rates and reach out to parents of boys who may keep them out of school because of not valuing education.

Through the execution of the revised National Gender and Equity Policy and other relevant sectoral policies whose principles are concomitant with the Beijing Declaration, Namibia remains dedicated to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment at all levels until gender equality and equity is realized.

From the review process, Namibia learned that the implementation of the National Gender Policy and its Plans of Actions requires a multi-sectoral approach which is coordinated through the National Gender Coordination mechanism. The coordination Mechanism provides guidelines for the implementation of the National Gender Policy and the aspirations of the Beijing Platform for Action and other international, continental, regional and national instruments on gender equality. Through the coordination mechanism, various stakeholders including O/M/As, private sector, CSOs, FBOs, traditional leaders, Regional Councils are involved in the implementation of the gender equality and equity programmes in a well-coordinated manner.