SWAZILAND SUCCESSFULLY UNDERTAKES FIRST DIGITAL CENSUS

KING MSWATI III RECOGNISES AFRICA’S fight against Malaria

SWAZILAND ACHIEVES 73% VIRAL LOAD SUPPRESSION among adults living with HIV and a major reduction in HIV incidence

2017 MTN BUSHFIRE FESTIVAL Lights SDGs fire
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Sisonkhe is a publication of the United Nations in Swaziland aimed at promoting public awareness of collective contribution of the UN to the development of the Kingdom of Swaziland. Contents of the publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations. Articles in this newsletter may be freely reprinted, with attribution to the UNCG and Sisonkhe.
Several important events took place in the first half of 2017. At global level, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, released the first Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) report providing a global overview of progress made towards the 2030 targets. At regional level, the Southern African Development Community, (SADC) under the Chair of His Majesty, King Mswati III, continued to promote socio-economic cooperation and integration among the 15 southern African states. Worth mentioning, amongst other key milestones, is the adoption of an Action Plan for the implementation of the SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063). At national level, Swaziland carried out the first digital Housing and Population Census, becoming the second country in the SADC region after Lesotho to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in census data collection. This is a great milestone for the country.

This issue of Sisonkhe provides a snapshot of the:

- Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey 2 (SHIMS 2) findings that the country has halved new HIV infections and doubled viral suppression since 2011. On behalf of the UN Country Team, I would like to congratulate the Kingdom of Swaziland for this globally celebrated achievement.
- Launch of the e-Government Communication Strategy, described by His Excellency, the Right Honorable Prime Minister, Dr. Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, as a “defining moment of change for Swaziland”.
- 2017 Population and Housing Census; how it was conducted and supported by stakeholders.
- Scaling up of cash-based interventions to reach 142,000 food insecure people from the 30,000 assisted in 2016 as part of the overall national emergency response to the El Niño-induced drought.

Let me use this opportunity to thank all stakeholders for their continued and excellent cooperation with the UN system in the Kingdom.

Please visit www.sz.one.un.org to learn more about UN work in Swaziland.

Enjoy the read!
Swaziland Successfully Undertakes First Digital Census

The 2017 Housing & Population Census, 7th in Swaziland, is the first to go digital, making it the second, after Lesotho to adopt this approach in the SADC region.

The 29th of April, 2017 went down in national history as the commencement of the first census data collection exercise to utilize mobile information communication technology (ICT).

The use of ICT devices (i.e. tablets) to collect census data worked very well and experiences from Swaziland will help countries that are taking the digital technology route to conduct their censuses in the coming months and years. ICT brought with it improved efficiencies in a number of ways, including minimizing human error, cutting down on data processing time, as well as more accurate and centralized monitoring of the data on a day to day basis.

At a practical level, this meant that the national Census Team was able to keep track of populations that had been counted, and those that had not been counted, enabling the team to intervene timely where necessary. Another distinctive element of the Swaziland 2017 census was the partnership forged between the Government of Swaziland (through the Central Statistical Office) and MTN Swaziland, the largest mobile network operator in the country, where a closed network system was specifically designed to facilitate communication among all members of the Census Team, including enumerators.

This subsidized free flow of communication made it easier for enumerators to reach out to their supervisors for real-time guidance when they encountered problems. As a cost minimizing strategy, one of the key recruitment strategies was the engagement of field staff such as census enumerators and supervisors to collect data in areas in which they normally reside. The data collection teams were able to get by with minimal needs for transportation and accommodation. This also had the advantage that they were familiar with the communities assigned to them. A South-South cooperation between the government of Swaziland and South Africa resulted in a loan agreement between the two countries for the use of 3,000 digital tablets, a collaboration that saved the Government of Swaziland over US$700,000 in procurement costs.

Further, the UNFPA East and Southern Africa Office, supported the participation of 21 African Young Statisticians and Demographers (VhSAD) from 7 countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Swaziland) to gain hands-on experience in the implementation of a national census, particularly in the use of digital technology for census data collection. This group of young people, under the auspices of the Association of Young Statisticians and Demographers, were attached to the national Central Statistics Office and worked alongside the Government Census Team to support different census components based on their expertise. The idea was to continue to support the Association of Young Statisticians and Demographers to further strengthen its capacity for the implementation of digital census in the Africa region.

UNFPA has provided both technical and financial support to undertake the 2017 Census particularly in the area of census information technology, capacity building and provision of Census equipment. UNFPA also led the coordination and leveraging of resources from other UN agencies and development partners for various processes in the Census implementation. Other UN agencies that have contributed to the Swaziland census are UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, WFP and UNAIDS. UNFPA’s total contribution to the 2017 census activities has been US$400,000 and other UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, WFP and UNAIDS) have contributed a total of US$74,000.

The Government of Swaziland is putting together the enormous data collected from the people of Swaziland, checking it to ensure that data from all communities in the country is accounted for. Currently the data is being validated and preparation of the reports, in various phases, is ongoing.
Swaziland achieves 73% viral load suppression and a major reduction in HIV incidence

“Now is the time to revitalize the momentum already achieved and make further substantial inroads towards that elusive goal of Zero new infections” - Prime Minister

3% of adults in Swaziland living with HIV and taking ARVs are virally suppressed,” the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Excellency, Dr Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini announced on the 24th of July in a statement during the presentation of the 2016 Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey 2 (SHIMS 2) findings at the Cabinet offices.

The country achieved an increase, from 34.8% to 73%, in the extent of viral load suppression among those on anti-retroviral treatment (ART) between ages 18-49 years.

The annual rate of new infections as a proportion of the Swazi population, according to the SHIMS 2 findings, has been reduced from 2.5% in 2010-2011, to 1.4% in 2015-2016 (2.0% for adult women and 0.9% for adult men) which is more than 44% reduction in new infections.

“Swaziland has demonstrated to the world that shared responsibility and global solidarity produces results,” UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibé said in a press statement. “Working together with PEPFAR and partners, Swaziland is saving lives and on track to control the epidemic,” he added.

His Excellency, Dr. Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini stated that these results indicate that a much higher proportion of those on ART are taking their treatment more consistently – a vital routine that also has to be sustained for an individual’s protection from any slide from HIV into AIDS.

“We are proud to be the first country in the world to have used this highly robust, out-in-the-field system to measure the impact of the national response, which has produced the results disseminated today,” the Prime Minister remarked when giving a background the SHIMS, first conducted in 2011.

After 2011, there was a rapid scaling-up of HIV prevention and treatment interventions such as ART, male circumcision, HIV testing services and the prevention of mother to child HIV transmission. The rapid scale up of a comprehensive HIV response, including prevention and treatment, in the past five years was noted by the Prime Minister to have made a significant impact.

He commended the immeasurable support from development partners, particularly the UN family, Global Fund, PEPFAR, the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and the International Centre for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP).

“These partnerships have facilitated a substantial skills transfer from international to national teams and the national capacity to conduct such national surveys. Reducing and, ideally, eliminating, the incidence of new HIV infections is, one battle in a bigger war,” he said. The SHIMS, which is part of the Public Health Impact Assessments (PHIA), was conducted with funding from United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The PM concluded by noting that the Government now stands on a new and elevated springboard, ready to jump to higher levels of commitment and achieve the national goal of an AIDS-free nation by 2022.

“Now is the time to revitalize the momentum already achieved and make further substantial inroads towards that elusive goal of Zero new infections” - Prime Minister
King Mswati III recognizes Africa’s fight against malaria

“As Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, I wish to commend my fellow Heads of State, governments, fellow Africans and our partners for the progress made to date”
- His Majesty, King Mswati III

Speaking on the eve of the World Malaria Day, celebrated on April 25, His Majesty King Mswati III, the Ingwenyama of eSwatini recognized Africa’s fight against a centuries’ old enemy, malaria.

His Majesty King Mswati III, born in April 19, 1968 celebrated his 49th birthday in a glamorous event held in Siteki in the Lubombo region on the 24th of April. His Majesty King Mswati III is the Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) after being elected Chairman during the 28th African Union Summit in January 2017. “As Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance, I wish to commend my fellow Heads of State, governments, fellow Africans and our partners for the progress made to date,” he said.

Swaziland is a leader in the fight against malaria in Africa and heavily relies on its domestic resources in its fight against the deadly disease. Elaborating during his birthday, the Ingwenyama observed that many lives have been lost through malaria. He stated, however, that even though a great reduction in malaria incidence has been experienced over the years with the aim to eliminate malaria by 2020 amongst the Elimination8 (E8) and all Africa by 2030, these gains are fragile.

He said recent reports presenting that malaria increase is being experienced in the region this year, clearly demonstrate that more needs to be done so that the gains that have been made are not lost, but build on them for further progress. He noted that imported cases of malaria are a challenge that must be addressed, adding that this is why cross border collaboration is critical in the fight against malaria.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is among 21 countries globally with the potential to interrupt indigenous malaria transmission by 2020, thereby achieving the goal of malaria elimination. Malaria elimination is included and prioritised in the national health agenda as evidenced by the availability of domestic financing in addition to technical and financial support from partners including the World Health Organization (WHO). There is also political commitment at the highest level as His Majesty, King Mswati III, is the chairperson of the ALMA for the next two years. The programme also has adequate and appropriate human resources.

Malaria is a notifiable disease in Swaziland hence all confirmed cases are reported through the Immediate Disease Notification System (IDNS). The notification triggers intensive follow up done for all index cases, including case investigation, classification and reactive case detection. The main vector control intervention is targeted Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) supplemented by use of Long Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLINs). There is a good reporting system for spray activities feeding into database for IRS planning. These interventions are complimented by an innovative home improvement project where eaves of all houses in identified high risk areas are screened to prevent mosquito entry.

Health workers are regularly trained on malaria diagnosis and case management. All malaria cases are parasitologically confirmed before treatment with Artemisinin Based Combination Therapy according to national treatment guidelines. Malaria diagnosis and treatment is free of charge in both public and private health facilities. Antimalarial drugs and laboratory commodities are available in all facilities and the country has rolled out a Laboratory Information Management System for commodity tracking.

“MSP © 2016 Feb - Aug 2017

Sisokhe 6
Government launches “Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free” Initiative

“Through this initiative, as a nation we are geared towards achieving our own goal of ending AIDS even earlier before the Global target of 2030, and this is encouraging us to work even harder” - Minister of Health, Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the global community set an ambitious target of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

To reach this target, children, adolescents and young women need a super-fast-track approach to access HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. This approach holds the potential to end the AIDS epidemic among children, adolescents and young women by 2020 and building on this momentum, Swaziland has joined other countries to accelerate the agenda of the Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free Initiative known as the ‘Three Frees’ Initiative.

UNAIDS Country Director, Tim Rwabuhemba presented that the initiative is about galvanizing global momentum around a shared and ambitious agenda of meeting fast-track targets by 2020. Led by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in partnership with the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), it brings together a coalition of partners to build on the tremendous progress achieved under the Global Plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive. ‘Three Frees provides a roadmap for the urgent work ahead, elevating and amplifying key initiatives that are already accelerating progress for children, adolescents and young women.

Honourable Minister of Health, Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane launched the initiative on behalf of the Government where partners were briefed on the approach(87,847),(926,996). The Minister said the initiative was a reminder to Government and its partners to accelerate efforts towards ending AIDS by strengthening implementation of prevention of HIV infections among children aged 0 to 14 years and provision of life-long antiretroviral therapy to pregnant women living with HIV.

She further noted that the initiative focuses on reducing the number of new HIV infections among adolescents and young women aged 10 to 24 years and providing voluntary medical male circumcision to young men aged 10 to 29 years. “Let me highlight that this initiative is helping us to build momentum towards achieving the 90' 90' 90' targets, which focus on ensuring that people know their status early, get treatment early and live quality lives with a suppressed HIV. The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland is therefore aligning itself with the Start Free Stay Free AIDS Free Initiative and is implementing national strategies and community agendas towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2022.

“As a nation, we are geared through this initiative towards achieving our own goal of ending AIDS even earlier before the global target of 2030, and this is encouraging us to work even harder,” the Minister said. Present at the stakeholder briefing was US Ambassador to Swaziland, Lisa Peterson who said the Three Frees framework will assure that Swaziland achieves His Majesty’s vision of an AIDS-free generation by 2022, further taking pride in the US government partnership with the Government alongside stakeholders such as the UN family, Civil Society, MSF and other partners that support ‘Three Frees’ activities in Swaziland.

“This framework will further strengthen this partnership and accelerate the elimination of HIV. It has established ambitious global targets and Swaziland is already well on the way to reach them. For example, to “Start Free” eliminate HIV infections among children and maintain pregnant women on ART. Currently, 90.7% of all health facilities with Maternal Child Health services also provide PMTCT,” she said, further applauding the Government for its unwavering commitment to halt the AIDS epidemic in Swaziland.
UN with EU, Germany, Canada and Sweden support scales up cash-based food assistance

As part of the overall national emergency response to the El Niño-induced drought, the UN scaled up its cash-based interventions to reach 142,000 food insecure people in 2017 from the 30,000 assisted in 2016.

Achieved through support from the EU, Germany, Canada and Sweden, the interventions introduced in October 2016 marked the first use of Cash Based Transfers (CBT) modalities, in Swaziland for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

WFP closed the emergency operation to coincide with the end of the lean season in May 2017, but the use of CBT remains a feature of the UN’s support to the country in the post-emergency environment. The transfers are done at household level, based on the number of people per household.

Bongekile Nkonyane, mother of 9 children and a beneficiary of CBT, collects her household’s monthly benefit of SZL110 per person from a local mobile money agent to buy food for her household. “The money I receive has helped me and my family so much. I used to work in the farms to try to provide food for my family, but because of the drought I could only afford one meal a day. The money I get helps me buy enough food to feed my family three meals a day,” she narrated.

Above: A beneficiary of the Cash Based Transfers receiving their monthly cash benefit from a MTN Mobile Money agent. WFP Swaziland©2017

Above (L): Bongekile receiving a monthly cash benefit from a mobile money agent. Above (R): Bongekile later goes to a local supermarket in Nkilongo, a small community in the Lubombo region of Swaziland, one of the worst drought-affected regions with 46 percent of people identified as food insecure. Below (L): Selected items from Bongekile’s shopping list. Below (R): Bongekile smiles at a cash register.
Swaziland conducts first joint HIV/TB/PMTCT and Viral Hepatitis review

Antiretroviral (ARV) initiation has been decentralised to Public Health Units, Health Centres and TB units with initiation threshold moving from CD4 count less than 500 to Test & Start.

In May 2017, the Kingdom of Swaziland completed the first ever joint review of four programmes; HIV, TB, Viral Hepatitis prevention and control as well as Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT).

This is in line with the country’s plan to strengthen integration of health programmes. Currently, the programmes have separate strategic plans which are all aligned to the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP 2013 – 2018). The two-weeks long review process was commissioned by the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Health Dr Simon Zwane and was supported technically and financially by the Government of Swaziland, the World Health Organization (WHO) UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, PEPFAR, EGPAF, ICAP, URC and other UN agencies.

Over 25 experts from the region and beyond including senior staff in the Ministries of health of Botswana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe participated as external reviewers. The support by experts from other African laboratories, and health workforce; analyse current investments for HIV and TB control, and identify priority investment areas for the short and medium term as well as conduct baseline assessment of Viral Hepatitis burden and services to inform development of national plan. The findings of the review were shared with stakeholders through a high level breakfast meeting held at Mountain Inn Hotel in Mbabane and a wider stakeholder meeting held at Royal Swazi Hotel in Ezulwini. The high level meeting was attended by Senior Ministry of Health officials WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and other development partners representatives.

Major achievements were identified in the different programmes. The review team reported that there is very high political will to tackle HIV/TB and Sexually transmitted diseases with good progress in managing HIV and reversing trends in TB. Of note is the fact that there is rapid initiation of patients including children on drug susceptible TB treatment (average 2 days) based on standardized regimens, in line with national guidelines and also consistent with international recommendations.

There is also progressive increase in treatment success rate: 70% in 2012 to 79% in 2015 cohorts. For Drug Resistant TB (DR-TB) treatment success rate improved from 56% (2014) to 70% (2016). The country has further introduced new drugs for DR-TB treatment including adoption of short course regimen. The country is also implementing an Active Case Finding (ACF) initiative country wide to pursue contact tracing for drug sensitive TB and DR-TB patients by conducting door to door screening within communities.

As far as the HIV response is concerned, antiretroviral (ARV) initiation has been decentralised to Public Health Units, Health Centres and TB units with initiation threshold moving from CD4 count less than 500 to Test & Start. A total of 26,290 adults were initiated on ART in 2016 and currently a total of 171,266 patients are on treatment. The retention on treatment at 12 months is 95% for both adults and children. Through SDGs 3 target 3.3, the country seeks to end the epidemics of TB, AIDS, Viral Hepatitis as well as Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases.
Launch of e-Government Communication Strategy a "defining moment of change" for Swaziland

"We need to maintain pace in our developments in the digital sphere while at the same time ensuring that the e-Government foundational requirements are consistently in place and meeting international standard" - Prime Minister.

Digital technologies continue to unlock great prospects across the world as governments embrace the power of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to bring about the positive socio-economic transformation for the people.

Subsequent to the development of an e-Government Strategy which was succeeded by the commissioning of a UN-funded study, "Electronic Government for Swaziland: Assessing the Opportunities", His Excellency the Prime Minister, Dr. Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, has launched the e-Government Communication Strategy. Prime Minister described the launch held at the Royal Villas Hotel on July 3rd, as a "defining moment of change", that will move the country to the next level in the programme to apply digital technology in Government processes.

"We need to maintain pace in our developments in the digital sphere while at the same time ensuring that the e-Government foundational requirements are consistently in place and meeting international standards," he said. The strategy was presented as an important tool to promote and market e-government services to the public to allow extensive use of the services and presenting to citizens and the business community, the benefits brought by technology.

"Harnessing the knowledge economy using ICTs to drive national innovation, entrepreneurship and public service delivery has opened new opportunities for Governments. This is indeed a great milestone," the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Israel Dessalegne, said in his remarks. The UN Resident Coordinator cited the launch of the mobile-based Government services in June 2015, piloted through the Ministry of Home Affairs and other ministries as a good example of ICT-driven service delivery further commending the government on achieving this milestone. He further noted that the communication strategy is directly linked to the e-Government vision which puts citizens first, addresses Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and paves way for economic growth.

"One of the targets of SDG 9, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, for instance, is to, “Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the internet in least developed countries by 2020,” he said.

MTN Chief Executive Officer, Ambrose Dlamini noted that the launch of the e-Government communication strategy was a pointer that the country is working towards the highest levels of development by leveraging e-Government to transform civil service to become a catalyst of national change. The launch of the strategy also entailed the unveiling of the e-Government logo where the designer, from Elegant Websites explained how he coined the concept of the design; taken from the traditional Swazi way of greeting; shaking of hands combined with the ‘e’ sign for internet/electronic platform.

Also launched on the day was the Point of Sale service by Standard Bank which eliminates the traditional long queues that required people to go into government offices. "Anytime and anywhere is the promise," the Prime Minister remarked. Other services launched on the day included the Client Management Information System (CMIS) part of the e-Health by the Ministry of Health, as well as the Provisional company registration by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade.

His Excellency, the Right Honourable Prime Minister welcomed by the UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative, Israel Dessalegne, during the launch whilst MTN CEO, Ambrose Dlamini looks on. © UN Swaziland 2017
Swaziland’s internationally acclaimed music and arts festival, MTN Bushfire Festival held in May 26th-28th, provided a global platform for the UN Country Team to create awareness, educate and set off a public discussion on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) using the tagline, “Sustain your fire.”

Announced in 2016 by CNN as one of the “7 African music festivals you really have to see” and listed by BBC as a “top African festival”, the MTN Bushfire held annually in the scenic farmlands of the Malkerns Valley, celebrates creative expression whilst promoting social responsibility and environmental sustainability. The festival's 2017 theme and hashtag was, “Green your fire”, promoted through various social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. Taking climate action (SDG 13) through ensuring a green, eco-friendly and inspiring festival, a recycling system was developed with a target of a minimum of 50% recycling of waste. Throughout the festival attended by over 26 000 people, in every Zone there were green bins for recyclables and black bins for general waste.

Various climate-smart actions, including the All Out Africa Foundation’s #KhulaTreeProject which called everyone to leave a lasting legacy at the 2017 Bushfire Festival by planting a tree at the nearby Mlilwane Nature Reserve, made educating the multi-generational global community about SDGs simpler.

Tourists, the youth, families, artists, exhibitors and the general public visited the SDGs stall to learn about the global goals, take an SDGs quiz, express their views on what the goals mean to them and identify their role as individuals. (Click here to view pictures) “I think my role would be dedicating my spare time to educate children or a youth group on life skills. That’s how I believe I can contribute to the achievement of Goal 4,” one respondent of the SDGs quiz said.

“I was so happy to see a variety of fruits and vegetables on sale at the Bushfire Food Market. As a ministry we encourage farmers to produce more and more vegetables to ensure food security,” the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Moses Vilakati, said in response to an SDG 12-related question on sustainable agriculture during a live interview with Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service (SBIS).

He further expressed a positive impression of the festival, citing his conversation with the Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Christopher Gamedze, on how the MTN Bushfire has put Swaziland on the map. Similar sentiments were shared by His Excellency, the Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Paul Dlamini, who was also in attendance alongside with other senior government officials.

The 3-day festival succeeded an SDG 4 related activity called, “MTN Bushfire Schools Festival” held from the 22nd May until the 25th with the aim of creating a sustainable approach to arts education. During the Schools festival, a Teacher’s Workshop took place at the Malkerns Country Club where the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Lars Tushuizen presented on SDGs calling teachers from over 20 schools to use their experience to simplify the SDGs to students. “In that way, you could foster behavioral changes such as intentionally and consistently using bins to dispose waste,” he said.
devastating results for relationships with family. If not treated, depression can lead to suicide, now the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. Depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. According to the latest estimates from WHO, more than 300 million people are now living with depression.

The theme for this year encouraged people to talk and it is for this reason that different stakeholders including UN agencies, development partners, members from the public and private sectors, civil society, faith based organisations and survivors of depression gathered at the Happy Valley Hotel with an objective to break the stigma that hinders access to care and support for people living with depression.

The theme for this year encouraged people to talk and it is for this reason that different stakeholders including UN agencies, development partners, members from the public and private sectors, civil society, faith based organisations and survivors of depression gathered at the Happy Valley Hotel with an objective to break the stigma that hinders access to care and support for people living with depression.

World Health Day is commemorated annually on 7th of April to mark the anniversary of the founding of WHO in 1948. Each year a theme that highlights a priority area of public health concern in the world is selected. The theme for 2017 was Depression, with a slogan: “Depression, Let’s talk.”

Depression, according to National Psychiatrist Dr Violet Mwanjali, is a mood disorder which causes negative changes in feelings, thinking and behavior. It affects people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all countries. It causes mental distress and impacts on individuals' ability to perform even simple everyday tasks, sometimes with devastating results for relationships with family. If not treated, depression can lead to suicide, now the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. Depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. According to the latest estimates from WHO, more than 300 million people are now living with depression.

The objectives of this year’s campaign were that: the general public be better informed about depression, people with depression seek help and that family, friends and colleagues of individuals living with depression able to provide support. The National Psychiatric Referral Hospital reported that in Swaziland 102 males committed suicide in 2014, compared to 23 females in the same year. Dr Mwanjali reported that about 29 females were admitted for the first time at the National Psychiatric Hospital between January and December 2015 while 10 were re-admissions. On the other hand, 15 males were admitted and five re-admitted during the same year.

Ministry of Health PS Dr Simon Zwane who represented the Minister of Health emphasised that depression, nonetheless, can be prevented and treated. Speaking at the same event, WHO Representative Dr Tigest Ketsela Mengestu called for the strengthening of community engagement and social mobilisation programmes to ensure proper public education and awareness creation on depression, clearing misunderstandings, and breaking stigma and discrimination. “Let us ensure provision of community care and treatment for depression in primary care settings by trained general health personnel as fundamental steps towards easier access to care for a large number of people.” she said.
Depression

Let’s talk

WHERE TO DONATE

Pigg’s Peak Government Hospital
Tel: 2437 1111

Hlatikulu Government Hospital
Tel: 2217 6111

Mankayane Government Hospital
Tel: 2538 8311

Nhlangano Health Centre
Tel: 2207 8241

Good Shepherd Hospital (Siteki)
Tel: 2343 4133

Dvokolwako Health Centre
Tel: 2382 1001

National Psychiatric Referral Hosp.
Tel: 2505 6550, 2505 5170

Mkhuzweni Health Centre
Tel: 2431 6501, 2431 6031

FIND HELP

Mbabane Government Hospital
Tel: 2404 2111

Nhlangano Health Centre
Tel: 2207 8241

Dvokolwako Health Centre
Tel: 2382 1001

Mbabane Government Hospital
Tel: 2404 2111
Deputy Prime Minister highlighted that women’s socio-economic empowerment is an essential component of sustainable development. He said “in this regard, we need to commit on placing women at the centre of initiatives that would see them playing a pivotal role in the world of work”.

He concluded his remarks by urging women to aspire for leadership positions, have confidence in themselves and actively participate in politics in order to increase their representation. He stated that women have a demographic comparative advantage and how a majority of women are in some form of association which can be used as a means for mobilisation.

Other dignitaries who made remarks were: the SADC Secretary General, Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Israel Dessalegne, Civil Society and Lutsango Lwa Ka Ngwane. Stakeholders including the SADC Gender Unit and local non-governmental organisations. UNFPA pooled in resources to support the commemoration and a dialogue of women in the work place hosted by the Department of Gender and Family Issues under the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office and facilitated by SWAGAA.

Women from government institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organisations participated. The panel for the dialogue included SMME Unit – Director; SWABCHA – Director; SWEET Operations Manager; CIEAS representative– (Women in the Informal Sector – Cross Border – President); Presentations from the Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises (SMME) Unit; and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) – Director. The issue of women in leadership and decision making took a centre stage during the dialogue.

The meeting ended up constituting a small team that would pursue women's socio-economic and decision making agenda to realize significant changes in women’s economic status and representation in decision making positions in the next national elections.

Lutsango dancing to a traditional song during the commemoration of the 2017 International Women’s Day held at Mavuso Trade Centre. © UNFPA © 2017
World Blood Donor Day: UN staff donates blood

To commemorate World Blood Donor Day, the United Nations Swaziland staff responded to the call to donate blood to save lives.

A total of 22 UN staff donated blood and Heads of Agencies led by example and were the first to donate. The blood was collected by a team from the National Blood Transfusion Service (NBTS) at the UN offices. This was the first time hosting such an event and it was therefore suggested that this should be made a regular event. The country’s health system requires about 21,000 units of blood per year.

However, the National Blood Transfusion Services collects about 15,000 units of blood per year mainly from low risk blood donors, particularly school children. The big challenge therefore is that the demand for quality and safe blood exceeds supply. An adequate and reliable supply of safe blood can only be assured by a stable base of regular, voluntary, unpaid blood donors.

World Blood Donor Day is commemorated annually on June 14. The theme for this year’s World Blood Donor Day was “Don’t wait until disaster strikes. What can you do? Give blood, Give now, Give often.”

The main objective of the event was to encourage the Swazi adult population to donate blood and the UN staff in particular to become regular, voluntary blood donors.

The major highlight of the day was voluntary blood donation by the United Nations staff. This was a well appreciated noble initiative from the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in the spirit of Delivering as One (DoO) and through the leadership of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the coordination of the UN Cares and the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG).

Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year, including during emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters, and in the case of Swaziland; during road traffic accidents and childbirth.

The marchers convened at the Swaziland National Blood Transfusion Service where the Honourable Minister of Health, Senator Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane, representative from the Ministry of Education and Training and the WHO Country Representative, Dr Tigest Ketsela Mengestu encouraged individuals to donate blood. The key message was that blood is the most precious thing in this world a human being has. The blood one donates gives someone another chance at life and one day that someone may be a close relative, a friend, a loved one—or even oneself.

The WHO representative gave a reassurance that WHO would continue to support all appropriate initiatives aimed at ensuring that safe, life-saving blood and blood products are available for all, particularly those in emergency situations.

Meanwhile, Minister of Health Sibongile Ndlela-Simelane who was represented by Under Secretary Khabonina Mabuza emphasized that the need for adequate supply of blood requires a well-organised blood service which can only be ensured by engaging the entire community and a blood donor population committed to voluntary unpaid blood donation throughout the year.

Health workers marching during the commemoration of the World Blood donor day.
Don’t wait until disaster strikes
What can you do?

**GIVE BLOOD**
**GIVE NOW**
**GIVE OFTEN**

Blood transfusion is life saving in:

- Accidents (vehicles or workplace)
- Complicated surgery (major operations)
- Bleeding after giving birth
- Some illnesses (e.g. Leukemia, hemophilia, anemia)

An adult has an average of **5-6 litres** of blood. You need to only donate **450mls** of blood. Your body is able to replenish lost fluids in less than **24 hours**.

All results from a blood donation are kept strictly **confidential**

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**MANZINI**
Corner of Mancishane and Martin Street, behind Post Office.
Office hours: Mon - Fri: 8am - 5pm
Tel: 2505 3103 / 2505 3404 / 2505 9114/5
Postal Address: P.O. Box 54 Manzini

**MBABANE**
Blood Bank, adjacent to Mbabane Government Hospital
Office hours: Mon - Fri: 8am - 5pm
Tel: 2404 7732/ 2404 7738 / 2404 7322 / 2404 7335/ 2404 7548
Swaziland recognizes the month of June as children’s month. The month provides an opportunity for children and stakeholders working on children’s issues to intensify advocacy on specific issues.

The day of the African Child (DAC) 2017 theme: “Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunities for children in Africa by 2030” set a strong tone for reflection at this year’s children’s month launch and commemoration of the Day of the African child which was held at Eqinisweni Primary School in the Shiselweni Region on the 16th of June. Eqinisweni primary school was identified as a good model of an inclusive school which has an enrolment of more than one thousand learners.

The commemoration of the DAC was attended by esteemed guests that included the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Paul Dlamini, UNICEF Country Representative popularly known to children as Gogo Rachel Odede, the Region’s Regional Administrator Themba Masuku, Chiefs of various Chiefdoms in the region, senior government officials from various ministries, children and civil society partners.

In his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the significance of the theme. “Accelerated protection, renewed empowerment and access to equal opportunities to all our children, should be our collective focus today as we meet yet again to ponder and celebrate the day of the African children,” he said. He further noted the importance of reflecting on what the country is doing differently in the form of take home lessons and availability of our plans to produce protected, resilient, mature and talented children. The DPM stated that various studies including the National Study on the Drivers of Violence 2016, have confirmed that the disintegration of the family structure due to the erosion of cultural norms is the major culprit that has manufactured the multitudes of socio economic ills that we face as a country today. Another latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) report presents recorded registration figures for children under the age of 5 at 53%, leaving 47% or almost half the population unregistered. Thereby rendering our children bare and helpless in the face of eminent multiplerisks.

“The denial of the right to registration, as a basic right of all children in line with article 7 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and guaranteed and enforceable in law under the Children’s Protection and Welfare Act of 2012, amounts to gross irresponsibility, negligence and insensitivity to those of us who have duty to protect our children,” said the DPM. The DPM regrettably shared that the most affected children are those who are orphaned and vulnerable, as a result they lose out on opportunities. He proceeded to positively share that all marginalized groups should be protected from the evil of ignorance and that Parliament is invited to expedite the enactment of the persons with Disability Bill and the Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Bill.

UNICEF Country Representative Rachel Odede spoke strongly against the discrimination of children living with disabilities and reaffirmed UNICEF’s commitment to continue working with the Government and all stakeholders in ensuring that no child is left behind as we protect, empower and provide equal opportunities for all children. Speaking on behalf of children at the commemoration of the Day of the African Child, partially blind Veli Vilakati, a form 2 pupil of Evelyn Baring High, confidently and commandingly shared the issues that include discrimination, stigma and violence on children especially those with disabilities.

“We must do more and ensure that we address all the barriers that restrict children living with disabilities from actively and fully participating in appropriate early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education,” - UNICEF Representative, Rachel Odede
Swaziland Careers Fair presents high school students with UN career options

As the country ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all through SDG 4, the Swaziland Careers Fair remains an important forum for students to improve their competencies in career planning.

In line with the aspirations of Sustainable Development Goal 4 and UN Careers objectives, as in the past, the Swaziland Careers Fair – an initiative organized annually for high schools by the United World College of Southern Africa, afforded high school students the opportunity to learn about available career options in the UN.

The 2017 fair, which marked the 10th anniversary, was held on the 26th of July at Mavuso Trade and Exhibition Centre and was supported by the Government of Swaziland and the education sector partners, companies, institutions of higher learning, media and various organizations, including the UN. "What exactly does the UN do?" was the single common question asked by all student groups who visited the UN stall. The fair representation of UN entities in Swaziland during the fair made educating the students about the UN easier.

Students showed interest in various career-related UN programmes including internship and volunteer programmes. The diversity in the UN, some 41,000 staff from 193 Member States, was presented as one of the reasons students who aspired to join the UN would have an opportunity to work in multicultural teams with people from all backgrounds and cultures who have wide perspectives, experiences, expectations and approaches.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) face of the stall gave the UN an opportunity to work with various SDGs information resources to help increase awareness, integration and framing of education’s role in strengthening sustainable development. As the country ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all through SDG 4, the Swaziland Careers Fair remains an important forum for students to improve their competencies in career planning.
### DEPRESSION

#### Definition

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Depression as a common mental illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that people normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for 14 days or longer.

In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

#### Who is affected?

Affects people of all ages, from all walks of life, in all countries.

#### What are the effects?

- It causes mental distress and impacts on individuals’ ability to perform even simple everyday tasks, sometimes with devastating results for relationships with family.
- If not treated, depression can lead to suicide, now the second leading cause of death among **15-29-year olds**.

#### How many are affected?

- Depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide.
- According to the latest estimates from WHO, more than **300 million** people are now living with depression.

#### What are the risks?

- Depression increases the risk of substance use disorders and diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Also, people with these other conditions have a higher risk of depression.

#### What to do

- There’s no single and direct way to prevent depression but taking steps to control stress, is important.
- Friendship and social support, especially in times of crisis is crucial.
- Seek medical advice as soon as possible because, treatment at the earliest sign of a problem can help prevent depression from worsening.

### Reported suicide cases

- **102 Swazi males** committed suicide in 2014, compared to **23 females** in the same year.

### Admissions

- About **29 females** were admitted for the first time at the National Psychiatric Hospital between January and December 2015 compared to **15 males**.
- About **10 females** were re-admitted at the National Psychiatric Hospital between January and December 2015 compared to **5 males**.

### Re-admissions

- **10 females**
- **5 males**
Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, The Late UNFPA Executive Director

Dr. Osotimehin passed away during the evening of 4 June 2017 in his home in West Harrison, New York.

His burial took place on 21st July 2017 in his home country Nigeria. In addition, a series of memorial events in New York, London, Abuja and within the UN System globally were held in his honour.

These events brought together dignitaries and friends from all across the world, including the UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres.

Born on 6 February 1949, the 68-year-old Nigerian was a physician and global leader of public health, and the empowerment of women and young people, with a strong focus on promoting human rights in population and development.

Dr. Osotimehin was bold and never afraid of a challenge and his strong leadership helped keep the health and rights of the world’s women and girls high on the global agenda. He understood that the world’s 1.8 billion young people are truly its greatest hope for the future.

The late UNFPA Executive Director vigorously championed three major transformative goals of zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet demand for family planning and the elimination of harmful practices against women and girls. UNFPA urges all to honour his legacy by rallying around those global goals.

UNFPA is dedicated to continuing Dr. Osotimehin’s grand vision for women and young people and will continue to stand up for the human rights and dignity of everyone, particularly the most vulnerable adolescent girls.

[1949 - 2017]

A global leader of public health and the empowerment of women and young people

Dr. Osotimehin became UNFPA’s fourth Executive Director on January 1, 2011, with the rank of United Nations Under-Secretary-General.

Dr. Osotimehin qualified as a doctor from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1972, and went to the University of Birmingham, England, where he got a doctorate in medicine in 1979.

He was appointed Professor at the University of Ibadan in 1980 and headed the Department of Clinical Pathology before being elected Provost of the College of Medicine in 1990.

Dr. Osotimehin received the Nigerian national honour of Officer of the Order of the Niger in December 2005. He led several councils, including in the World Economic Forum. Before this appointment, Dr. Osotimehin was Nigeria’s Minister of Health. Prior to that, he was Director-General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, which coordinated HIV and AIDS work in Nigeria.

Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.
NEW APPOINTMENT

Mr. Achim Steiner - Administrator

- Took up office in June 2017 for a term of four years.
- Confirmed by the UN General Assembly in April 19, 2017, following his nomination by Secretary-General António Guterres.
- Also chairs the UN Development Group, which unites the 32 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other bodies that work to support sustainable development.
- Was born in Brazil and holds Brazilian and German nationality.

Hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oxford and a Master of Arts degree from the University of London, with specialization in development economics, regional planning and international development and environment policy.
- Also studied at the German Development Institute in Berlin, and at Harvard Business School. His previous experience also includes assignments with governmental, non-governmental, as well as international organizations around the world.
- Brings more than three decades of leadership experience in global development issues and international cooperation. He is a passionate advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals and the need for unprecedented global cooperation to deliver on this ambitious agenda.

UNDP

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion.
- We help countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.
- This is a critical time for the world. At UNDP, we see this period as a huge opportunity to advance the global sustainable development agenda.

- Former Director of the Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford and Professorial Fellow at Balliol College, Oxford (since 2016)
- Served as Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme between 2006 and 2016.
- Served as Director-General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi from 2009 to 2011.
- Also served as Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature from 2001 to 2006.
- Formerly the Secretary-General of the World Commission on Dams, in South Africa, from 1998 to 2001.
NEW APPOINTMENT

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus - Director-General

• Elected by members States of the WHO as the new Director-General, he began his five-year term in July 1, 2017.

• Holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham, UK and a Master of Science (Msc), Immunology of Infectious Diseases from the University of London. Also holds a Bachelor of Science (Bsc), Biology from Asmara University, Eritrea (formerly Ethiopia).

• Prior to his election as WHO’s next Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia from 2012-2016 and as Minister of Health, Ethiopia from 2005-2012.

• He has also served as chair of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; as chair of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership Board, and as co-chair of the Board of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

WHO

• Our goal is to build a better, healthier future for people all over the world. Working through offices in more than 150 countries, WHO staff work side by side with governments and other partners to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people.

• Together we strive to combat diseases – infectious diseases like influenza and HIV and noncommunicable ones like cancer and heart disease.

As Minister of Health, Ethiopia, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus led a comprehensive reform effort of the country’s health system, including the expansion of the country’s health infrastructure, creating 3,500 health centres and 16,000 health posts; expanded the health workforce by 38,000 health extension workers; and initiated financing mechanisms to expand health insurance coverage. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he led the effort to negotiate the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in which 193 countries committed to the financing necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As Chair of the Global Fund and of RBM, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus secured record funding for the two organizations and created the Global Malaria Action Plan, which expanded RBM’s reach beyond Africa to Asia and Latin America.
# UN STAFF MOVEMENTS

## INCOMING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sphephile Tsabedze</td>
<td>FAO, PA to Assistant FAO Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chibwe Lwamba</td>
<td>UNAIDS, Strategic Information Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr James Antwi</td>
<td>WHO, Human Resource for Health Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandla Ndlangamandla</td>
<td>WHO, Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phindile Thwala</td>
<td>WFP, Finance Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sifiso Mabuza</td>
<td>WFP, Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbongeni Dlamini</td>
<td>FAO, Agribusiness Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phumzile Dlamini</td>
<td>UNICEF, Child Protection Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya Earnshaw</td>
<td>WHO, Human Resource for Health Associate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mcolisi Mabila</td>
<td>WFP, Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siniketiwe Zwane</td>
<td>WFP, Programme Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella Tilli</td>
<td>WFP, Monitoring Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengetile Tezzy Nhlengethwa</td>
<td>Resident Coordinator’s Office, UN Coordination Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanny Siyumbwa</td>
<td>Resident Coordinator’s Office, Relocation Project Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OUTGOING

### UNAIDS
- Pepukai Chikukwa - Strategic Information Advisor
- Gloria Bille - Strategic Interventions Advisor
- Nuha Ceesay - Investment and Efficiency Advisor
- Nuha Ceesay - Investment and Efficiency Advisor
- Senelisiwe Ntshangase - Programme Analyst

### WFP
- Paula Fredin - Donor Relations, Reports & Communications Consultant
- Robert Samupindi - Programme Policy Consultant
- Shingirai Chimbwanda - Programme Policy Consultant

### UNFPA
- Phumzile Dlamini - Programme Analyst, Communications & Resource Mobilization