

## **Statement by Ambassador Neville Gertze at the CSW63 Multi-Stakeholder Forum in preparing for the upcoming CSW Session**

1. Thank you to UN Women and the Commission on the Status of Women for organizing this Multi-Stakeholder Forum to really allow us to discuss concepts to be brought up during the upcoming CSW63. And to further highlight some of the services our governments are responsible for rolling out for the improvements of the lives of women and girls.
2. In Namibia, the right to education is constitutionally protected by Article 20 of the constitution and has made provisions in the last several years so that primary and secondary school education are free in Namibia. Article 95 of the Constitution also lays out the principles on the promotion of the welfare of the people, including promoting and maintaining acceptable standards of health. By putting these rights into law, Namibia has made sure that these public services receive the highest attention as they are part of the necessary tools to achieve development for our people.
3. This also means that the government has to allocate the requisite budget for the provision of these services. For the past several years, Namibia has consistently allocated the ministries responsible for public services with the largest shares of the national budget. This includes the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministries of Education, Ministry of Poverty Eradication, since these public services can only be ensured with the right budget allocations. Thus making it possible for government to provide free primary and secondary education, as well as

4. An example of the benefits of large budget allocation to public services is the achievements government has made in the health sector, particularly as it pertains to women's health concerning HIV and AIDS and maternal healthcare. Namibia is on course to surpassing the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals on HIV and this is largely due to strong political will, combined with the requisite resources. As HIV/AIDS largely affect more women and girls than men and boys in Namibia, this is an example of public services being prioritized to truly benefit women and girls. Further, Namibia has greatly improved maternal health, and expectant mothers now have access to greater services for reduced maternal and infant mortality. In Namibia, many women still have to travel long distances to access hospitals and clinics to give birth, and for that reason, government has accelerated the building of waiting shelters for expectant mothers, where all necessary services are available. Mobile clinics are another innovative way government has devised to deliver service to those in remote areas. Government has also worked hard at integrating these health services, so that nothing is offered in isolation, and also to maximize the resources available.
5. Gender-based violence remains a big concern in Namibia, and one of the most innovative way to combat it, and assist victims was for the government to roll out gender based violence protection units across all regions. These units come with police officers, social workers, nurses and other support staff, and have been crucial to provide services closer to victims. Namibia has also partnered with the UN System and bilateral partners on these, and have been able to get much needed technical support.
6. This is a little bit on Namibia's use of public services to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and I would go as far as to say, codifying these public services in the

constitution has been the leading factor to our success, because then government can and is held accountable by the population.

7. I thank you,