



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

MEDIA RELEASE
2018 WORLD AIDS DAY GLOBAL THEME

HISTORY OF WORLD AIDS DAY

The 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day will be marked on 1 December 2018. Since 1988, the AIDS response has made significant progress and today millions of people living with HIV are leading healthy and productive lives. But we still have miles to go, as the latest UNAIDS report shows, and one of the challenges remaining is knowledge of HIV status. HIV testing is essential for expanding treatment and achieving the 90-90-90 targets. It also empowers people to make choices about HIV prevention, so that they can protect themselves and their loved ones.

Many barriers to HIV testing remain and UNAID estimates that more than 9.4 million people living with HIV still do not know their status. Stigma and discrimination deters people from taking an HIV test. Access to confidential HIV testing remains an issue of concern. Many people get tested only after becoming ill and symptomatic. This leads to HIV treatment being initiated late, undermining its many benefits for both treatment and prevention. At the same time, there are many new opportunities to expand access to HIV testing. Self-testing, community-based testing services and multi-disease testing are helping people to know their HIV status.

NAMIBIA' APPROACH

The Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) in collaboration with Civil Society and Development partners will join the rest of the world in the commemoration of 2018 World AIDS Day (WAD) which routinely takes place on the 1st of December. WAD continues to be dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. Government and health officials, non-governmental organizations and individuals around the world observe the day, often with education on AIDS prevention and control.

It is to be noted that with government's efforts of ensuring treatment for the infected and the scale up of prevention and diagnostic programmatic areas, the pandemic continues to threaten and impair Namibians from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The reiteration remains that it is every citizen's responsibility to take a stand in curbing the negative effects of HIV and AIDS and support those vulnerable and affected.

2018 WORLD AIDS DAY THEME:

The Ministry of Health and Social Services would like to inform the public, its stakeholders and health partners that this year's commemoration of World AIDS Day will be conducted under the global theme: **"KNOW YOUR STATUS" with a sub focuses on: Empowering Girls & Young Women against HIV & Teenage Pregnancy.**

This theme is backed by the UNAIDS ensuring that HIV testing is essential for expanding treatment and achieving the 90-90-90 targets. It also empowers young people to make informed choices about HIV prevention, so that they can protect themselves and their loved ones.

This years' main event will be hosted by Ohangwena region and to take place on Friday the 30th of November 2018.

Issued by: Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS)

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Yours sincerely



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Ben Nangombe (Mr)
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