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Goals/DESA

### **Opening Remarks**

## **Capacity Building on Public Policy Development, Review, Evaluation and Coordination for the Acceleration of the SDGs in Namibia**

Delivered by Mr. Amson Sibanda, Chief, National Strategies and Capacity Building Branch,  
DSDG/DESA

20 October

Mrs. Monica Geingos, First Lady, Government of the Republic of Namibia,  
Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, Director General, National Planning Commission,  
Mr. Sen Pang, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Namibia,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Government of the Republic of Namibia and all those involved in organizing this capacity building workshop.

Shortly after the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs received the request for technical assistance from the Republic of Namibia's National Planning Commission, the COVID-19 pandemic upended the planning for many of our technical assistance projects that we provide to countries, as it did so many other aspects of our lives.

Therefore, we are pleased that, through the leadership of the National Planning Commission, UN Namibia and the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs have been able to put this workshop jointly together.

As the National Planning Commission, you play an important role in taking stock of the gaps, challenges and progress the country is making to achieve its development aspirations, including what the global recession and the COVID-19 pandemic have done and will do to Namibia's prospects of achieving the 2030 Agenda and AU Agenda 2063.

Like many African countries, Namibia is dealing with myriad challenges, including the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on lives, the economy and on efforts to eradicate poverty, combat inequality and address the ongoing effects of climate change.

Further, as a middle-income country, Namibia also faces significant hurdles accessing much needed relief efforts that are critical to support a durable recovery.

The combined impact of all these forces means that Namibia, like many African countries is careening off track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The slow and uneven progress implementing the 2030 Agenda and the COVID-19 pandemic have clearly demonstrated more closely than ever the importance of putting in place the right set of national plans and strategies that include prioritizing job creation, the provision of quality education and health care, social protection, inclusive finance, and the empowerment of women and girls.

To do this, we need to integrate the principles of sustainable development into all decision-making.

I am therefore pleased to note that this week's programme consists of a hybrid format, consisting of an in-person gathering, benefiting from local and international expertise of DESA staff, UN Namibia, UNECA and other resource persons. It is a novel way of delivering capacity development that seeks to overcome some of the constraints imposed by the pandemic. Under different circumstances, many of us would have gathered in person.

Planning institutions have a central role in mainstreaming and integrating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national policy frameworks. Integration of the SDGs is a continual process. It entails shifting from a siloed approach to one that is informed by interlinkages between SDG targets.

The 2030 Agenda encourages Member States to conduct regular and inclusive review of progress at the national and subnational levels. In this context, it is commendable that Namibia has committed to conducting its second Voluntary National Review, at the 2021 High-level Political Forum. Namibia's 2018 review provides a solid baseline from which to assess gaps, challenges and progress.

The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 underlines the relevance of response and recovery measures based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To quote the Secretary-General, "COVID-19 is not only a wake-up call, it is a dress rehearsal for the world of challenges to come ... The pandemic has taught us that our choices matter. As we look to the future, let us make sure we choose wisely."

Hence, the SDGs, with their universal scope and interlinked nature, are more essential than ever during this crisis and its aftermath. The pandemic also highlights the importance of properly

designing and effectively implementing national sustainable development plans and strategies. Such strategies can help enhance resilience and build capacity to withstand external shocks.

This workshop is organized in very close cooperation with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, in line with the new model for delivering assistance in country. It has been a true partnership, which bodes well for the remainder of this project.

This workshop is the first in a series of planned activities. I trust that it will be a fitting beginning to a fruitful partnership.

I also hope that this workshop will help support Namibia build capacities for coherent, evidence-based, and inclusive policymaking.

Thank you.