Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, which provides an update for the October 2015 activities.

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Several education activities took place including the 2015 Quality Education Platform which was held from 5 to 9 October in Windhoek, Namibia in light of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and more specifically the education goal which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all.

In collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s office, UNDP and the National Planning Commission, the office equipped correspondents from community radio stations in Namibia with specific SDGs knowledge and information to roll out an effective SDGs awareness campaign.

Other activities in this edition include the launch of the National Report of an Action Research Initiative, the training of Life Skills Teachers on Online Comprehensive Sexuality Education course and the workshop for community radios presenters on Intangible Cultural Heritage. Our Invitee of the month is Ms. Micaela Marques de Sousa, UNICEF Representative to Namibia. She shares with us UNICEF’s mandate, key interventions and partnerships with other stakeholders in Namibia.

We hope to continue building on these successful activities and you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

Your comments and feedback are greatly appreciated. Please contact: c.mapfumo@unesco.org.

Namibia elected President of the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference

Namibia’s Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Technology and member of the UNESCO Executive Board, Honourable Stanley Simataa has been elected to chair the 38th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO (3-19 November 2015). It is a great honour for Namibia and for the African continent. We will come later with more details in the next issue of our Newsletter.

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Honourable Simataa (second left) joined by UNESCO Director General, Ms. Irina Bokova (centre), UNESCO Regional Director for Southern Africa, Prof. Hubert Gijzen (far left), UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office, Dr. Jean-Pierre Ilboudo (fourth from left) and UNESCO Regional Director for West Africa (Sahel), Ms. Ann Therese Ndong Jatta (right)
Namibia celebrates UNESCO’s 70th anniversary in Windhoek on 28th October 2015. The well attended event was a result of the cooperative efforts between the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM) and UNESCO Windhoek Office.

The 70th anniversary celebration reflected on UNESCO’s work in Namibia and revisited UNESCO’s orientations and programmes for the next decade and beyond. The event also highlighted the relevance of the Organization’s mandate and priorities in Namibia with particular focus on Sustainable development Goals in line with Namibia’s own Developmental Plans and strategies.

Quoting his Excellency Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, the keynote speaker at the celebrations Honourable Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation said, “Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations.”

She further added that, “this reminds us that the United Nations organisations such as UNESCO contributed immensely to the struggle for our independence, and to this day our global partners continue to provide technical and financial support towards our development.”

Honourable Kandjii-Murangi also emphasised that Namibia will continue to cooperate with UNESCO to implement the new post 2015 Development Agenda.

“We expect UNESCO to play an increasing role in the post-2015 Development Agenda. The just concluded 197th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO reiterated the role of UNESCO to support Member States in delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s),” she said.

Speaking at the same event, UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office, Dr Jean Pierre Ilboudo highlighted some of the contributions of UNESCO’s work in Namibia.

“The office drives UNESCO’s mission to contribute to the building of peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture and communications and information,” said Dr Ilboudo.

The former Prime Minister of Namibia Rt. Honourable Nahas Angula, gave his reflection of UNESCO’s collaboration with Namibia before independence. “My association with UNESCO dates back to around 1974 when I was in Zambia where I started a school for Namibian exiled children. UNESCO provided monthly stipends for teachers under an assistance program for the liberation movements,” he said.

The event was also attended by Ms. Kiki Gbeho, United Nations Resident Coordinator, members of the United Nations Country Team, and members of the diplomatic community among others.
Workshop on Climate Change Reporting: The UNESCO publication on climate change in Africa as the learning tool

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in collaboration with its affiliate, Syndicat des Professionnels de L’Information et de la Communication (SYNPICS) held a two-day workshop on Climate Change Reporting for journalists from West and Central Africa, from 14 – 15 October, 2015 in the Senegalese capital, Dakar.

The Workshop brought together 15 journalists from Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo and the host country, Senegal, to build their capacities in reporting climate change.

Speaking at the Opening Ceremony, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madam Mariam Ndaiye, who represented the Minister, said that climate change is at the very core of everything that we do presently, and can have a very devastating impact on our lives. “Climate change” – she emphasized “has resulted into lower yield, reduce water supply, erosion and deforestation while at the same time impacting on our livelihood and rendering a lot of people into poverty”.

Access to timely and relevant information she added, is very important as it can help us to take the necessary actions that are needed to salvage our lives. African Journalists therefore, she said have a very important role to play in the fight against climate change, because “Africa as a continent is responsible for only 7% of emission but it is more severely hit by the consequences of climate change. Journalists must do more to disseminate information on climate change and to ensure that climate change is seen as a priority in newspapers reports as well as radio and television programmes in order for it to take its place on the national debate.

The Director of Communication at - the Ministry of Culture and Communication, Alioune Drame, in his statement to the participants at the workshop, said that the Climate Change Reporting workshop for West and Central African journalists is very timely, in the sense that it comes just before the COP 21 meeting in Paris. Drame lamented that our newspapers give too much attention and space to politics and issues related to the economy with little or no attention to other very important elements like climate change and too often claim that climate change stories do not sell.

He told journalists at the workshop that it is their duty to make climate change stories sell, because this is more important than the political and economic stories that fill our newspapers every day, since our very survival and future now depends on climate change.

The Director of the IFJ Africa Office, Gabriel Baglo, in his solidarity statement, said that the IFJ has very been much active in the continent over the past few years on various crucial issues, most especially those concerning human rights. He emphasized that this meeting is a follow up to the IFJ Continental meeting on the Media and Climate and Climate Change that was held in July 2014 in Nairobi.

According to Gabriel Baglo, the Nairobi meeting revealed that most African journalists are not very much aware of the concepts of climate change which partly explains their reluctance to cover the story. He expressed the hope that the workshop in Dakar would provide journalists on the continent with the necessary tools to cover climate change stories.

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the very limited reports on climate change in our newspapers. This meeting therefore is design to build the capacities of journalists across the continent in order to help them to report more effectively on climate change.

The Secretary General of Syndicat des Professionnels de L’Information et de la Communication (SYNPICS), Ibrahima Ndaiye, in his address of welcome said that the training programme is very much relevant for journalists in the continent, especially when one considers the challenges pose by climate change to the African continent. He called on the participants at the workshop to take the training very seriously and to share the knowledge gained with their colleagues back home who did not have the opportunity to be part of the training programme.

The Workshop, under the guidance of Dr. Jean Pierre Ilboudo of the UNESCO Office in Windhoek, Namibia dealt with various issues in relation to climate change including the definition of the concepts and lexicon of climate change and the reporting techniques on climate; radio as the greatest medium of information on climate change; Challenges and injustices of climate change; Gaps in covering climate change; and the 7 Essential Reporting Tips on Climate change. All references made during this training session were pulled out from the excellent UNESCO/CI publication entitled "Climate change in Africa: A guidebook for the journalists".

At the end of the training session a copy of the manual was given to each participant in order for them to use it back home to train other journalists.

A resolution was made to draft a proposal for training of trainers’ activities on climate change using the IPDC funds.

A network of journalists dealing with climate change issues was created and will be animated from the Federation of African journalists based in Dakar.

The Seminar was sponsored by the IFJ through the Union to Union Project 2014 – 2016.
The 2015 Quality Education Platform was held from 5 to 9 October in Windhoek, Namibia in light of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals, and more specifically the education goal which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of life-long learning opportunities for all.

The 2015 Quality Education Platform was officially opened by Hon Prof Peter H. Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly, who encouraged the participants to be inspired by the new international education agenda “to renew our commitment towards enhancing the quality of education in Namibia and in our Southern Africa Region”. Hon Prof Katjavivi especially appreciated UNESCO’s efforts in convening this important platform as well as the People’s Republic of China’s funding of the important project on Quality Teachers in Namibia.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Namibia, Ms. Kiki Gbeho welcomed the regional participants emphasising the important role that literacy plays in poverty eradication. She highlighted literacy as “the foundation for lifelong learning and fully essential to social and human development in its ability to transform lives”.

Since the first day of the Regional Workshop marked the 5th of October, the World Teachers Day, Dr Jean Pierre Ilboudo, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative to Namibia, took the opportunity to celebrate teachers by highlighting their fundamental role in the provision of quality education.

Under the 2015 theme, “Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies”, Dr Ilboudo started and ended by strongly emphasizing that “an education system is only as strong as its teachers”. His pledge to support teachers was appreciated by the audience.

The 2015 Quality Education Platform consisted of two main components: a) Southern Africa Regional Workshop on Literacy; b) National Quality Education Platform.

a) Southern Africa Regional Workshop on Literacy

With the aim of sharing good practices of literacy policies and programmes in the Southern Africa Region and collectively reflecting on literacy perspectives for the future, the Southern Africa Regional Workshop on Literacy was held on October 5th and 6th. The Namibian Education Community was joined by representatives from the education ministries in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The literacy workshop allowed for a regional mapping of the diverse literacy initiatives that are being undertaken in the Southern Africa sub region such as Associação-
2015 Quality Education Platform brings the education stakeholders in Southern Africa together

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Progresso’s programme ‘Literacy in Local Language, a Springboard for Gender Equality’ in Mozambique, which has been awarded the 2015 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize. The global and regional perspective on the progress made in literacy since 2000 was presented by Ms Mari Yasunaga, Literacy Specialist in the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, after which the eight Southern African countries presented their definitions, policies and measurements of literacy.

Other experiences shared included Namibia’s environmental literacy programme of the Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust (NaDEET), South Africa’s Kha Ri Gude National Literacy campaign and Mozambique’s Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) programme. In a concluding group work, the participants identified critical issues regarding the quality of literacy and recommendations for moving forward.

The Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, Hon Anna Nghipondoka officially closed the Regional Platform on behalf of Hon Katrina Hanse-Himarwa, Minister of Education, Arts and Culture. She highlighted “the important role of teachers in the acquisition of literacy and skills”, but also the “need to look at literacy from a broad perspective because literacy goes further than just being able to read a basic sentence”. By emphasizing that “it is never not urgent to improve the quality of our education system”, she officially closed the Southern Africa Regional Workshop on Literacy.

b) National Quality Education Platform

The Namibian Education community continued deliberations on quality education during the rest of the week (7 to 9 October).

The National Platform focussed on different subthemes pertinent to quality and aimed at creating a shared understanding of quality education, while committing to progress and achievement in the framework of the post-2015 education agenda and the goals set out for 2030.

These subthemes included learning through the mother languages, quality early learning, educators’ professional development and the integration of ICTs and technology in teaching and learning.

During a Language Symposium, international speakers highlighted the importance of mother tongue instruction in the formative years of schooling as well as the relevance of the mother tongue in the acquisition of a second language. Following the global perspective, Namibia’s country specific features were discussed, including the language policy, the language curriculum and transition from mother tongue to English, the establishment of a language board and language centre.

Following the language Symposium, the national platform turned its attention to the UNESCO/China Funds in Trust (CFIT) Project “Capacity Development for Quality in Pre- and Lower Primary Teacher Education in Namibia”. The overall project achievements as well as the results of the country wide collaborative Action Research Intervention Phase were presented. Written and oral reports of participating researchers showed that the CFIT project largely achieved its intended results.

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Another important subtheme of the National Platform was the analysis of opportunities and challenges of ICT integration in teaching and learning; through different presentations, the relevancy of ICTs in delivering equitable and quality lifelong learning opportunities was discussed. The presentations generated discussions on the integration of ICTs in the Namibian classrooms as well as in Namibia’s institutions of higher education. A highlight was the Kopano Education Forum, an online community of educators established in the framework of the UNESCO CFIT project and hosted by UNAM’s Continuing Professional Development Unit. The virtual forum intends to facilitate discussions and sharing of practices between the different stakeholders involved in education in Namibia.

A focus on the post 2015 education agenda and its important focus on sustainable development concluded the discussions of the Platform.

H.E. Mr Xin Shunkang, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the Republic of Namibia officially closed the 2015 Quality Education Platform.

The Ambassador was happy to recognize the platform as “another very important achievement of the CFIT project.” He highlighted that “multiple stakeholders are involved in education, and to come to recommendations for progress it is necessary to have all the different voices in the room”.

He applauded the UNESCO CFIT project and the organizers of the platform for being able to achieve this type of collaboration.

Mr Charles Kabajani, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and chairperson of the platform’s closing session, officially provided the Ambassador with a USB containing all presentations and deliberations made during the platform. Mr Kabajani handed over the device as “evidence of all the hard work done in the course of the one week platform”.

The platform was organized by the UNESCO Windhoek National Office in collaboration with the UNESCO Harare Regional Office for Southern Africa; the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation; and the Faculty of Education of the University of Namibia.
CFIT Namibia launches second National Research Report

The National Report of an Action Research initiative that was conducted in 56 pre- and lower primary classrooms in Namibia was officially launched on Thursday, 8 October, during the 2015 Quality Education Platform in Windhoek.

The report is part of the UNESCO/China Funds-in-Trust project “Capacity Development for Quality in Pre- and Lower Primary Teacher Education in Namibia” and is the second report in a series documenting the findings of a two year research and intervention initiative. This second phase report focuses on the classroom intervention carried out by 28 inter-institutional research teams in a one week period.

The teams that conducted the research included members of the University of Namibia’s Faculty of Education, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation.

Guided by findings from an initial research phase in 2014, which identified highlights and challenges in the Namibian pre- and lower primary classrooms, an intervention toolkit was developed and subsequently implemented in 2015. This strategy for intervention reflected a continuation of the inter-institutional collaborative lecturer-teacher action research, seeking to strengthen teachers’ and lecturers’ self-reflection while empowering them to transform their practice, all towards the long term objective for improvement of quality teaching and learning in the classrooms.

By connecting teaching interventions with sound evidence, the education community involved in this project standardized a research-based approach towards the solving of problems, a powerful and impressively dynamic blueprint for professional development.

The report describes the observed classroom changes as highly positive. They reflect what occurred during the one week period influenced by the novelty of the introduced materials and the accessible strong support from the research teams.

The report proves that the two year project approach of identifying the needs of classroom teachers, designing hands-on strategies to address the analysed challenges and collaborating with multiple stakeholders to conceptualize and implement the intervention, was powerful in affecting various layers of different stakeholders’ professional development. The observed positive influences of the intervention provide evidence for the potential of this professional development model and reinforce the importance of sustaining the created momentum.

By widely disseminating the successful research results, the project’s National Coordinating Committee pledges to encourage the Namibian education system to institutionalize this research-based reflective professional development model.

The complete report can be downloaded from the UNESCO website: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ULis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=234821&gp=0&ll=a
The Education Programme Committee of the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO met on the 13th of October to review the progress made from January 2015 and prepare for the 38th Session of UNESCO’s General Conference to be held from 16 to 18 November 2015 in Paris.

The meeting, which was convened by the chairperson of the committee, Mr Charles Kabajani who is also the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Deputy Chairperson of the Namibia National Commission for UNESCO, provided a platform to discuss matters relating to education in Namibia and ways in which the Government of Namibia together with partners such as UNESCO can improve the education system. Besides from the education programme committee members, the delegates to the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference and the education team of the UNESCO Windhoek National Office were also invited to attend.

Apart from updating the committee members on the education activities of the year 2015, of the UNESCO National Office as well as the National Commission, the meeting agenda focused on the 2015 celebrations of UNESCO’s 70th anniversary, which the National Commission and the Windhoek Office have been organizing together, and the preparations for the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference, which will be attended by a Namibian delegation led by Hon. Itah Kandji-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation.

The UNESCO Windhoek National Office Education team presented highlights and achievements of the UNESCO/China Funds-in-Trust (CFIT) project on quality early learning and educator’s professional development, the Better Education for Africa’s Rise (BEAR) project in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the work on HIV/HEALTH in education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The chairperson pledged his support to the creation of an inter-ministerial and inter-organizational national taskforce on ESD, spearheaded by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture with technical assistance from UNESCO. The taskforce would review all policies and strategies in ESD and come up with an action plan for Namibia to successfully implement the Global Action Programme on ESD in order to achieve sustainable development and the targets of vision 2030.

The Government of Namibia is investing a lot of resources into the education sector
120 Life skills teachers went through and completed an online course on Comprehensive Sexuality Education during a 4 days’ workshop held from 12 – 15 October 2015 in Otjiwarongo. The workshop was organized and facilitated by UNESCO and UNFPA.

This online course has been developed as an accessible resource to support the training of teachers and other educators to deliver school-based sexuality education in East and Southern Africa. For many countries -in the ESA region, the capacity and performance of teachers in delivering comprehensive sexuality curricula remains a significant implementation challenge.

Sexuality-related topics can be culturally and religiously sensitive. If teachers are to empower the young people in their care with the potentially life-saving knowledge, they need to be competent and comfortable to deliver the information that life skills based comprehensive sexuality education offers.

The trained teachers came from 8 regions of the country namely, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Otjozondjupa, Omaheke, Kunene, Kavango East, Kavango west and Zambezi. The online course will be rolled out to the rest of the regions in Namibia in the next biennium.
The Centre for Teaching and Learning of the Polytechnic of Namibia, transforming into the Namibia University of Science and Technology, organised a seminar on 14 October for UNESCO Windhoek Office to present the key findings of the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report. The Centre for Teaching and Learning organises such seminar every week on Wednesdays.

Staff members at Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN) were engaged in the seminar for them to understand the trends and challenges in education. The seminar provided a platform for professionals to reflect on the current situation and what needs to be done in order to improve the quality of education in Namibia. As an academic institution, the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN) is interested in the challenges faced in education globally, regionally and nationally in an attempt to respond to them through teaching and training. The Centre for Learning and Teaching aims to equip staff members with the knowledge of global trends in order to facilitate their professional development.

UNESCO’s presentation on the key findings of the GMR focused on the global and regional progress towards the attainment of the Education for All goals. Namibia’s country-specific achievements were also highlighted.

The presentation attracted comments and questions from staff members who wanted to have a number of issues clarified and a lengthy dialogue ensued centred on achievements and challenges in Namibia’s education system. Learners graduating from high schools are the students registering at the Polytechnic of Namibia; through the seminar, the academics were looking for answers regarding the current situation in schools in Namibia.

The Polytechnic of Namibia pledged to follow up on the forum early 2016 by discussing education and training issues in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were launched in September at the UN General Assembly in New York, USA.

Some of the Polytechnic of Namibia’s staff members during the presentation of the GMR’s key findings
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

The 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/68/163 in 2013 which proclaimed 2 November as the ‘International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists’ (IDEI).

The Resolution was adopted to counter a culture of impunity for crimes against journalists. It thus urged Member States to implement definite measures countering the present culture of impunity. The date was chosen in commemoration of the assassination of two French journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013.

This landmark resolution condemns all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers. It also urges Member States to do their utmost to prevent violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability, bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against journalists and media workers, and ensure that victims have access to appropriate remedies. It further calls upon States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference.

The focus on impunity of this resolution stems from the worrying situation that over the past decade, more than 700 journalists have been killed for bringing news and information to the public. In 2014 alone, the UNESCO Director-General condemned the killing of 87 journalists, media workers, and social media producers of public interest journalism. In 2012, the deadliest year for journalists, 123 cases were condemned.

These figures do not include the many more journalists who on a daily basis suffer from non-fatal attacks, including torture, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations. Furthermore, there are specific risks faced by women journalists including sexual attacks.

Worryingly, only one in ten cases committed against media workers over the past decade has led to a conviction. This impunity emboldens the perpetrators of the crimes and at the same time has a chilling effect on society including journalists themselves. Impunity breeds impunity and feeds into a vicious cycle.

According to the 2014 UNESCO Director-General’s Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity, less than six percent of the 593 cases of killings of journalists from 2006-2013 have been resolved. A quarter of these cases are considered as “ongoing” referring to their continued investigations over the various stages of the judicial system. In 60 percent of the cases, no information on the judicial process was made available to UNESCO notwithstanding the Director-General’s requests for such.

When attacks on journalists remain unpunished, a very negative message is sent that reporting the “embarrassing truth” or “unwanted opinions” will get ordinary people in trouble. Furthermore, society loses confidence in its own judiciary system which is meant to protect everyone from attacks on their rights.

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Perpetrators of crimes against journalists are thus emboldened when they realize they can attack their targets without ever facing justice.

Society as a whole suffers from impunity. The kind of news that gets “silenced” is exactly the kind that the public needs to know. Information is quintessential in order to make the best decisions in their lives, be it economic, social or political. This access to reliable and quality information is the very cornerstone of democracy, good governance, and effective institutions.

It is in recognition of such far-reaching consequences of impunity, especially of crimes against journalists, that the UN has declared 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists (IDEI).

IDEI provides a strategic opportunity to all stakeholders to focus public attention on the importance of ending impunity for crimes against journalists. It also opens new possibilities to draw in constituencies whose primary interests may be other than the safety of journalists. For example, given the symbolic significance of journalists to the wider issue of impunity and justice, all of those who work in the rule of law system, such as people involved in legal and judicial processes, can be reached out to. Others who are concerned with public participation and citizen’s rights to speak out on various issues such as corruption or domestic violence will also share an interest in the resolution on combating impunity of attacks on journalists, who by definition are actors in the public eye, and whose situation sends a signal to society at large.

Significantly, the Paris Declaration of the 2014 World Press Freedom Day conference held at UNESCO Headquarters states: “the continuing high level of killings of journalists calls for intensified action by international organizations, governments, media and other actors to give heightened attention to strengthening the safety of journalists and to bringing their killers to justice.” In particular, it called on journalists, professional and support associations, media outlets, internet intermediaries and social media practitioners to “support the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity with complementary or joint actions, and to enhance cooperation with each other”. A major opportunity for this is the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.

IDEI is of great significance to UN bodies, governments, the media, and to civil society as well as to potential new stakeholders where hitherto there have not been occasions to connect issues in mutual synergy. Therefore it is a very promising platform that can make a valuable contribution to the safety of journalists in the interest of societal development as a whole.

As UNESCO’s Director-General, Irina Bokova, stated in her message to mark the 2015 International Day to End Impunity, “Impunity is poisonous – it leads to self-censorship for fear of reprisal, depriving society of even more sources of significant information.”

All stakeholders should therefore work together to ensure safety of journalists and end all forms of crimes against the media.

Following his visit to Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site earlier this year, the UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office embarked on a second official mission to Namibia’s second World Heritage Site, the Namib Sand Sea from 23-25 October 2015.

Recognised as the second most visited destination in Namibia after the Etosha National Park, the Namib Sand Sea is the only coastal desert in the world that includes extensive dune fields influenced by fog. Dr. Ilboudo was accompanied by the National Professional Officer for the Culture Sector in Namibia, Mr. Boyson Ngondo.

The team undertook a guided tour of Sossusvlei, including the area inscribed as Namibia’s second World Heritage Site. They were accompanied by representatives of the Greater Sossusvlei Namib Landscape Coordinators.

After the excursion, the team held a meeting with the Greater Sossusvlei Namib Landscape Coordinators. The Coordinators made a presentation which was followed by discussions and mapping of the way forward with regards to possible collaboration and partnership. The Greater Sossusvlei-Namib landscape is part of NAM-PLACE - an initiative to lift conservation barriers and advocate for the establishment of a large-scale network of protected landscapes.

Covering an area of over three million hectares and a buffer zone of 899,500 hectares, the site is composed of two dune systems, an ancient semi-consolidated one overlain by a younger active one. The desert dunes are formed by the transportation of materials thousands of kilometres from the hinterland that are carried by river, ocean current and wind. It features gravel plains, coastal flats, rocky hills, inselbergs within the sand sea, a coastal lagoon and ephemeral rivers, resulting in a landscape of exceptional beauty. Fog is the primary source of water in the site, accounting for a unique environment in which endemic invertebrates, reptiles and mammals adapt to an ever-changing variety of microhabitats and ecological niches.

Life in the fog-bathed coastal dunes of the Namib Sand Sea is characterised by very rare behavioural, morphological and physiological adaptations that have evolved throughout its specialist communities. The large number of endemic plants and animals are globally-important examples of evolution and the resilience of life in extreme environments. According to the World Heritage Centre, the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of it being the world’s only coastal desert that includes extensive dune fields influenced by fog. It also represents a superlative natural phenomenon on account of the three-part ‘conveyor system’ which has produced the massive dune field from material transported over thousands of kilometres from the interior of the African continent by river erosion, ocean currents and wind.

The property is of outstanding importance for the in-situ conservation of an unusual and exceptional array of endemic species uniquely adapted to life in a hyper-arid desert environment in which fog serves as the primary source of water. The Namib Sand Sea has been under conservation management for more than 50 years with well-established management and resource allocation systems, based on regularly revised and updated management plans and long-term budgetary planning. There is potential for serial extension of the Namib Sand Sea beyond the Namib-Naukluft Park and beyond national borders to include other significant dune systems within other protected areas of the larger Namib Desert.
Fourteen journalists from four Namibian local radio stations (Base FM, NBC !AH Radio, Radio Live FM and Ohangwena Community radio) were sensitised on the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in a workshop held on 16th October 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia.

The workshop introduced participants to the concept of intangible cultural heritage, which according to the Convention refers to “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage”.

Presenting on the objectives of the 2003 Convention, Senior Culture Officer in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ms Freda Tawana said the Convention seeks to safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage and ensure respect of the same. She added that the Convention seeks to raise awareness on the importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage and provides - for international assistance and cooperation. Participants were also introduced to the five domains of ICH, namely: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices about nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship.

A member of the National Intangible Cultural Committee and lecturer from the College of Arts, Mr. Ishmael Sam briefed the journalists on various ICH safeguarding measures such as identification, research, documentation, inventoriyng, preservation, protection, promotion and awareness-raising among others.

He called upon journalists, particularly community journalists to assist in raising awareness on the importance of intangible cultural heritage and why it should be safeguarded.

He added that community radios have an obligation to articulate issues that are relevant to the development of their respective communities, and intangible cultural heritage - is one such important issue. The journalists committed to supporting the Government of Namibia and UNESCO in raising awareness about the Convention. Ohangwena Community Radio Station Manager, Mr. Peingondjabi Sheya said since it was their first time to hear about the Convention, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and UNESCO should produce information packs for the radio stations and also avail themselves for interviews.

“In order for us to talk authoritatively about this subject (ICH), which is bit technical for some of us, we need more information and technical experts who can avail themselves easily for interviews,” said Mr. Sheya.

“I therefore urge the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to encourage their regional officers to grant us (community radio journalists) interviews easily when we call them for information,” he added.

UNESCO used the workshop to inform community radio journalists about the 10th Session for the Intergovernmental Committee on ICH that will be held in at the Windhoek Country Club Resort from 30 November – 05 December 2015.

UNESCO Windhoek Culture Programme Assistant, Ms. Annakie Muvangua urged the journalists to raise awareness about this event in their respective communities.

The workshop was organised by UNESCO Windhoek Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture.
Namibia moves to bridge digital gap

The second national Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) summit which took place in October 2015 in Windhoek testified Namibia’s commitment to bridging the digital gap and creating a knowledge-based society.

The two-day summit which was held under the theme “Bridging the Digital Gap,” provided a national platform for stakeholders to reflect on ICT trends and challenges, both locally and across the globe.

Officially opening the summit, the Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Honourable Tjekero Tweya committed to implementing effective legislation that provides easy access to ICTs with the aim of creating a knowledge-based society.

The summit highlighted that in order for Namibia to effectively reach the ICT objectives as stipulated in its National Development Plan 4 (NDP4), the Government should forge productive partnerships with the private stakeholders that will deliver innovative ICT outcomes.

Over the years the Namibian government has made significant strides to integrate digital technology within the national development objectives. One of NDP4’s desired outcomes is the improved delivery of public services through the use of information and communication technology.

The country is currently making strides to achieve e-Government. According to the e-Government Strategic Action Plan for Namibia, the overall e-Government readiness score for Namibia is at 2.2 out of 4 possible points. This score rates the country as being of “Average” readiness. The current state of readiness for e-government in Namibia was assessed in terms of policy, access, content, capability and willingness.

The country still faces critical challenges in its efforts to close the digital divide. Mr. Laban Hiwilepo from Telecom Namibia presented a vivid display of the disproportion between households with and those without access to basic ICT services such as mobile broadband and personal computers.

The second national ICT summit brought together various local and international stakeholders including the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), UNESCO Windhoek Office, UNICEF, Telecom Namibia, Mobile Telecommunications Limited (MTC), Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST), Juniper, XON systems. About 20 exhibitors also participated in the Summit and pledges were made to support the development Namibia’s ICT infrastructure.
Community radios’ journalists trained in investigative journalism

Fourteen journalists and correspondents from four Namibian community radios namely, NBC !AH Radio, Base FM, Ohangwena Community Radio and Radio Live FM were trained in investigative journalism from 13 to 15 October 2015.

The journalists were equipped with an understanding of investigative journalism and how it differs and complements conventional news reporting. They were also capacitated with the necessary skills to conduct investigative journalism and explored different methods and tools that can be used in investigative journalism.

Prominent investigative journalist from The Namibian Newspaper, Mr. Tileni Mongudhi, conducted the workshop and imparted to the participants practical skills of conducting investigative journalism. He also provided practical examples demonstrating how the right to access information is still denied to journalists by public authorities in Namibia.

In terms of ethics, participants were guided through the Code of Ethics for the Namibian Media. It was emphasized that investigative journalists must uphold high ethical standards.

Some of the key ethical considerations discussed included accurate reporting, corrections, the right to reply, conflict of interest, management of sources, public interest, privacy issues, harassment and safeguarding the dignity of the journalism profession.

With regards to the use of special investigative techniques such as misrepresentation and undercover reporting, it was highlighted that the use of such methods can be justified only in the public interest and only when material cannot be obtained by any other means. Journalists were thus encouraged not to generally obtain or seek to obtain information through misrepresentation or deception.

Participants appreciated the workshop saying it demystified the whole concept of investigative journalism. They said it instilled a sense of duty in their minds, particularly letting the public know the truth.

One participant, Ms. Janet Kauina from Base FM said, “After this course, I feel like a real journalist, ready to expose all wrongdoings and let the public know the truth”.

“What I grasped from this workshop is that as journalists, we must play our watchdog role and let the people know the truth,” she added.

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Ms. Katrina Cwi, a journalist for NBC !ah Radio in Tsumkwe said that the training provided her with important skills that she will use to tackle critical issues often ignored in her community. According to Cwi, some of the serious but ignored issues in Tsumkwe include cases of disabled kids without parents who do not receive adequate support and often denied a basic education.

“These issues are pertinent in our community yet we have never dug deeper to understand for example where the support meant for the disabled kids is going or why they are not adequately catered for,” she said.

The workshop was organized within the framework of the UNESCO/SIDA funded project, “Empowering local radios with ICTs”. Through this project, UNESCO has built the capacities of local radios in Namibia in various areas including basic radio journalism, management of community radios, gender-sensitive reporting and sustainability of the radio stations.
Community reporters urged to popularize Sustainable Development Goals

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Comm. reporters urged to popularize SDGs

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Journalists and correspondents from community radio stations in Namibia have been urged to popularize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking at a workshop to familiarize journalists from four community radios on Sustainable Development Goals, UNAIDS Country Director, Dr. Tharcisse Barihuta (who was representing UNESCO Windhoek Head of Office, Dr. Jean-Pierre Ilboudo) urged the journalists to “tell everyone about the SDGs”.

He said the workshop came at the right time, as “it would acquaint community reporters with knowledge about SDGs enabling them to communicate such information to their respective communities”.

“When communicating the Post 2015 agenda, we must all adhere to human rights, gender equality and ethical principles of journalism,” said Dr. Barihuta.

“For example, we should not reinforce stereotypes of women and girls in our messages. We must walk what we talk,” he added. He urged the reporters to ensure that when they communicate the SDGs, they make the messages “simple and clear, but not simplistic”.

“We must build an understanding that all goals are interconnected. The rights to development to food and nutrition, to health, to decent work and living wage and to sexual reproductive rights are all interconnected and sustainable development and development justice cannot be achieved without achieving these fundamental rights,” he added.

Mr. Neil Boyer from UNDP gave an overview of the overall objectives of the SDGs. He indicated that unlike the MDGs which were developed with limited consultations of all stakeholders and member States, the formulation of the SDGs was very participatory as even local communities were consulted and gave their input. He said the SDGs were primarily developed to ensure that communities will meet their developmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. He further emphasised the importance of ensuring gender equality saying sustainable development can only be achieved if men and women are treated equally and given the same opportunities. The workshop was facilitated by the National Planning Commission’s Mr. Nandiuasora Mazeingo.

In his presentation, he informed participants how Namibia performed with regards to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before delving into the SDGs.

The journalists were encouraged to popularise the SDGs through the following ways among others:

- Host talk shows around the SDGs and poverty eradication in the lead up to key national and international political events;
- Feature international days such as International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, World Food Day, World Aids Day to discuss each SDG;
- Develop “On Air” programming around the SDGs and include the issues of poverty and the SDGs into briefs for scriptwriters;
- Host live audience shows discussing human interest stories, from a humanitarian perspective and in the context of the SDGs; and
- Run editorials, features, campaigns with targeted simple/complex messages that resonate with their audiences.

Participants acknowledged the importance of the workshop and committed to go back to the communities and “let everyone know about SDGs”.

UNESCO Windhoek Office organised the workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office, UNDP and the National Planning Commission. It was held under the theme, “Tell everyone about #SDGs”.

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Tell everyone about #SDGs….The SDG’s illustrated to make the messages “simple and clear”
Our invitee of the month is the UNICEF Representative to Namibia, Ms. Micaela Marques De Sousa. UNESCO Windhoek Newsletter team (UW) interviewed Ms. Micaela Marques De Sousa (MDS) and here are some extracts of the conversation.

UW: Thank you for agreeing to be our Invitee of the month. As the representative for UNICEF in Namibia, what are UNICEF’s core mandates?

MDS: From distributing lifesaving aid to children in the aftermath of World War II to fighting Ebola, UNICEF has been working for children for almost 70 years. UNICEF believes that all children have the right to survive, thrive and fulfill their potential - to the benefit of a better world. That means equal access to services and care that can make all the difference in children’s lives. It means working to achieve gender fairness and equality. It means working with children and adolescents and amplifying their concerns. And it means understanding the situation facing children everywhere – and supporting partners to improve that situation.

UW: In light of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) adopted in September 2015, how have these Goals impacted the policy and mandate of UNICEF regarding the management of Namibia’s Programme which includes health and nutrition, HIV, education, water and sanitation, child protection, social protection and policy?

MDS: Development is only truly sustainable if it is built around tackling climate change; fighting for every person to have a fair chance in life to fulfill their full potential; and supporting the well-being and resilience of people affected by conflict or living in fragile contexts. This is what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to achieve, which can only be done through investments in the planet and in all people at the start of their lives - when they are children.

Investing in all children and young people is central to achieving all aspects of sustainable development – and monitoring progress for children is crucial to know which investments to make. As stated in the SDGs’ Outcome Document, children are both ‘agents of change’ and ‘torch bearers’ for sustainable development – and this applies in every area of our work: health and nutrition, HIV, education, water and sanitation, child protection and social protection. They must be involved in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs to effectively and sustainably complete the work of building a society in which every child can survive and thrive, learn and grow and have the opportunity to fulfill their full potential.

UW: As part of the UN family, what are the comparative advantages of UNICEF and how do you complement other Agencies’ efforts?

MDS: The most exciting aspect of UNICEF’s mandate is that it is so multi-sectoral. The focus on children needs to engage with multiple partners - government (and that includes parliament, line ministries, coordinators such as OPM and NPC, as...
well as advocacy with cabinet), civil society, academia and private sector, as well as other development partners, the UN team, including Children themselves. It also has to engage across multiple sectors – for children to survive and thrive, learn and grow, this needs support in health sector, education sector, gender, protection, and so on.

This requires coordination with other agencies to ensure that our work is complementary – there is for example a well-articulated division of labour among all UN agencies in the HIV response with UNICEF most active around elimination of mother-to-child transmission and on supporting adolescents to stay HIV negative, or to be supported if they are HIV positive. Similarly, we cooperate closely with WHO to ensure a child focus in the health response – a recent example is the School Health manual and with UNESCO in the education sector.

**UW:** What are some of the most leading-edge achievements of UNICEF in Namibia thus far?

**MDS:** This year saw Parliament enact the Child Care and Protection Act No3 of 2015. This is the product of a long and hugely consultative process and updates to existing legislation some of which were last updated in the 1960s. It also incorporates most of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – providing strong platform for further regulations and support to realize the rights of all children everywhere in Namibia. As UNICEF, we have actively supported the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to consult, draft and advocate for this legislation. This has been a great way to mark the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Other breakthroughs include the expansion of the Health Extension Worker Programme to almost every region. Fully funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Services – based on a UNICEF/ CDC/ WHO - supported pilot in Kunene Region, drawing upon Ethiopia’s experience, the Programme has resulted in approximately USD 200,000 leveraging multi-million dollar budget from government (USD18m for 2014-15). This Programme closes the gap between communities and the static health services which the most remote communities find hard to access.

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In education, a few years ago our focus was on the HIV response – for example the My Future My Choice programme was fully absorbed by government as the school-based life skills programme. Under this new programme of cooperation, we have provided more support to education per se – such as the consultations around the update of the Education Act, cutting edge research on incentives for teachers in remote areas as well as strengthening the Education Management Information System.

These examples reflect the mix of strategies for the UNICEF programme in Namibia, recognizing the upper-Middle Income Country environment, namely: support to legislative and policy development in line with international norms and standards, proof of concept, or modelling of new ways of doing business as well as the importance of evidence and using data and research for programming and policy development.

**UW**: As the representative for UNICEF in Namibia, what are some of the pressing emergencies regarding children, health and education in Namibia?

The progress made since Independence has been phenomenal, and the label of upper Middle Income Country reflects that to some extent. However, averages can conceal a much deeper story. Inequality is recognized as a huge challenge: in income, in access to services, and in outcomes for children. There is clearly unfinished business from the MDGs, for example on mortality, nutrition and open defecation but also other aspects now covered by the SDGs such as the high levels of interpersonal violence. The increased frequency of droughts is also putting families and children at risk, especially those in the first 1,000 days of life where so much of future growth and potential of each child can easily be stunted and thwarted.

**UW**: Recently, the President of the Republic of Namibia declared war on poverty and called upon all development partners to help his government in this fight. Also the high youth unemployment rate is a significant contributing factor to poverty in Namibia. What is UNICEF doing to fight poverty in Namibia within the context of its mandate?

**MDS**: Last week, our Annual Review was held, literally next door to the National Consultation on Poverty Eradication and Wealth Redistribution. There I made the following remarks:

“From our perspective any attempt to eradicate poverty must give priority to children, otherwise poverty will be transmitted from one generation to the next without end. From our research, we know that families with children are far more likely to be below the poverty line. We also know that poverty and access to social services cuts both ways. Firstly, poorer people are least likely to access and benefit from services – we see this in nutrition data, mortality rates, drop-outs from school - in almost every case those from the poorest quintile have distinctly worse outcomes. Secondly, it works the other way – those who are well nourished and cared for in the first thousand days, those who do get to school and stay in school, those who are protected from abuse and neglect are far more likely to succeed, to earn more, to live longer, in short to thrive. For both of these reasons, paying attention to the social services is critical to the war on poverty – to ensure that all the great laws and policies that have been developed are actually implemented, that there is capacity to deliver services, and there is data collected to see who is being left behind and why”.

**UW**: What are some of the key opportunities for UNICEF and the Namibian Government working together?

**MDS**: UNICEF has been present in Namibia since Independence. Our partnership remains strong and is well
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articulated in the GRN-UN Partnership Framework. The new Government’s priority of the War on Poverty and the SDGs both provide a platform for continued partnership, ensuring children remain at the heart of development in Namibia.

UW: What opportunities are there for UNESCO and UNICEF to work together in Namibia?

MDS: We already work closely in the context of the GRN-UN Partnership Framework - most notably as the two agencies with the greatest stake in the Education and Skills Pillar. Here we provide coordinated support to the two education ministries (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation).

UW: Can you tell us a bit about your professional career and how you ended up in Namibia after serving the UN in multiple African countries?

MDS: My career has been with UNICEF ever since I started as a National Programme Officer in UNICEF Mozambique. From there, in the early 1990s, I moved to serve as the Health/Education Specialist with UNICEF in Kampala, Uganda. At this stage I was already deeply involved in programming for HIV and AIDS in the midst of the pandemic. In this capacity, I facilitated the implementation of the Health Education and AIDS Network Programme, as well as managing the communications aspects of the whole UNICEF country programme.

In 1996 I moved to Harare, Zimbabwe as the Programme Coordinator for HIV and AIDS in UNICEF, working with the Government of Zimbabwe and other partners to develop effective information, education and communication strategies for HIV and AIDS/ STD prevention and control. In 2000 I moved again, this time to serve as HIV and AIDS/ Protection Advisor with UNICEF in Pretoria, South Africa.

In 2007, my career took a new turn: developing Partnerships for Africa’s Children. Here I served as Policy Advocacy and Communication Specialist with UNICEF and the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Working with the UNICEF Representative, I was responsible for advocacy, raising the profile of Africa’s children through enhancing UNICEF’s partnership with the AU, UNECA and other African regional organizations on issues that affect children, young people and women.

From there, back to a country office as Chief of Communications in Harare, Zimbabwe from July 2009 to 2012; planning, monitoring and evaluation of the office’s advocacy and communication strategy to promote

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awareness for children’s rights, focusing on Communication for Development; Media Outreach and Advocacy; Child and Young People’s Participation; and Private-Public Partnerships.

It was in 2012 that I moved to my current position as UNICEF Representative, here in Windhoek.

UW: We know you as the Representative for UNICEF in Namibia; but please tell us who Ms. Micaela Marques De Sousa really is besides the title of leadership she holds? What are your hobbies? What really makes your day? How do you deal with challenges?

MDS: Besides my leadership role, I am a family woman. I love my family - my children, spouse, brothers and sisters. My loving parents even though departed, I love them dearly. I enjoy the company of my friends. My hobbies include listening to music, reading, cooking and doing some exercise. I also watch movies.

I face challenges by not running away from them. I try my best to understand the situation and I go for dialogue. I consult. Where there is a potential solution, I am happy to embrace the solution. Sometimes it is a question of compromising and eventually building consensus where possible.

UW: Tell us about your parents and siblings. Did they have any influence on the person you are today?

MDS: I am who I am today because of my family roots - my parents, my brothers and sisters. I came from a family of 10 brothers and sisters. I am the 7th of the 10. Yes, they shaped and influenced me by granting me not only protection and education but may other things. Above all, they instilled in me norms and values, beliefs (including my Faith), and principles that guided me throughout my life. These are honesty, humility, hard work and compassion. I am constantly reminded of the privilege and the opportunity to serve the world’s children through UNICEF, and the most disadvantaged groups.

UW: How do you balance between your demanding work and the family?

MDS: Priority setting! My work is very important. My family is very important too. I embrace both graciously to the best of my ability. I am grateful and appreciate that I have a very supportive family. Sometimes sacrifices have to be made. And I make them.

UW: We have come to the end of our interview, thank you for sharing your time with us. However, before we say goodbye, what advice, quote or words of inspiration would you like to share with our readers?

MDS: Protecting the Lives of all Namibia’s children everywhere in Namibia is not an option, it is a moral obligation. It is ours to act!