

The SRHR

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# BULLETIN



UNFPA

ESWATINI



## Eswatini's Commemoration of International Day of the Midwife 2023



**Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for Ministry of Health, Phetsile Dlamini.**



**Matron Albert Thwala motivating midwives at the commemoration.**



**UNFPA Eswatini Maternal Health Program Analyst Thamary Silindza.**

*On the 5th of May 2023, UNFPA in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) commemorated the International Day of the Midwife themed, "Together Again: From Evidence to Reality."*

*This is an annual event that recognises and celebrates the essential role midwives play in ensuring safe and healthy pregnancies and childbirths. The theme encouraged midwives to stay updated with current research and evidence and further emphasised the need for midwives to critically analyse findings, and integrate them into their daily practice to enhance quality of care provision.*

*In support of quality of care provision, "The Ministry of Health has put in place strategies to strengthen midwifery practice, with the recently established Community of Practice (COP) for midwives, which is a learning platform for peer learning and gaining of knowledge to enhance the midwifery care," stated the Minister of Health, Senator Lizzie Nkosi represented by Deputy Chief Nursing Officer of the Ministry of Health, Miss Phetsile Dlamini during the event.*

*During the commemoration, UNFPA commended the Ministry of Health's recent developments towards improving delivery of quality maternal and neonatal health services. Through its SRH Programme, UNFPA supports a digital solution for safe deliveries aimed at enhancing intrapartum care. Furthermore, UNFPA in collaboration with MoH is supporting initiatives that improve midwifery education (theory and practice) and address policy gaps in SRH. These will contribute to the attainment of maternal health related SDGs.*

*To promote RH commodity security UNFPA applauds MoH for signing the Third-Party Procurement Agreement. This is another strategy that will reduce shortage of family planning and lifesaving maternal health commodities in the maternity units, stated by Thamary Silindza the UNFPA Maternal Health Program Analyst during the commemoration.*

*The International Day of the Midwife, celebrated the invaluable contributions of midwives and shed light on the challenges they face. The event had a profound impact by raising awareness, fostering collaborations, and advocating for the rights and well-being of midwives. "By continuing to support and investing in midwifery, we honor midwives' critical role in ensuring safe and positive pregnancy outcomes and childbirth experiences for all women," Matron Albert Thwala stated.*

## Imparting knowledge on widows' rights and participation of women in decision-making

On the 26th of April 2023, UNFPA partnered with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Umhluma Women and Youth Foundation and CANGO to host a workshop aimed at capacitating Traditional leaders on widows' customary rights and the participation of women in decision making.

The workshop was themed "Imparting knowledge on orphans and widows' customary land rights, the law, and the role of traditional leaders on customary issues. Over 30 traditional leaders attended the workshop.

The workshop educated and enlightened participants on the need for women and men to enjoy similar privileges in communities.

In rural communities in Eswatini, women, particularly widowed women are marginalized. For instance, widowed women cannot participate in chieftom gatherings when are still mourning because they are believed to be carrying a dark spirit.

This has led traditional authorities to push aside urgent issues affecting widowed women resulting to violations of their rights to property and resources that are grabbed in the process.



**Women in decision-making workshop participants.**

"I am grateful to be part of this training, our wish is for traditional leaders to come together to discuss issues of violations of the rights of orphaned children and widows in communities, and find solutions on how they can be protected from losing their assets and properties after the death of a parent or spouse," stated Ms Nomzamo Dlamini, the Coordinator of Gender and Family issues at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO).

"As a woman and an official member of the inner council in the Malindza Chieftom, I will make sure that the rights of widows are respected and that they are treated equally and with dignity," Sethu Fakudze, the Secretary of the Malindza Chieftom commented during the workshop.

"In Swazi Law and Custom, women accessed land rights through their husbands or male relatives and traditional leaders

This is evolving because of the legal reforms that promote gender equality.

As a result, some chiefdoms now allow single women rights to access land," Mr Thamsanqa Thikazi, Shiselweni Region Traditional Court Administrator said.

In emphasising the role of traditional leaders in preventing human rights violations, Lungelo Zulu, the Director of Umhluma Women and Youth Foundation appreciated the participation of traditional leaders in the workshop.

Umhluma Foundation "is founded on the idea that justice is served through truth.

We are grateful for all the support that traditional leaders continue to provide to many widows who are ousted by their in-laws to regain their assets.



## Towards Integration of population issues in development planning: Training of multi-sectoral planners



*Planning officers from various sectors pose for a photo after the training.*

From 26 to 28 June 2023, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, National Population Unit, through technical and financial support from UNFPA, held a capacity building workshop for Planners at regional and national level from various government ministries, town councils and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

They were equipped with skills for integrating population issues into development planning. This training capacitated planners on evidence-based planning to ensure that development plans always factor in population dynamics.

The main purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the capacity of planners and related professionals on the practical aspects of integrating population issues in their plans at national and sector level.

The capacity building provided planners with the opportunity to analyse gaps and identify the building blocks for the review of the 2012 Guidelines for Integrating Population Issues in Development Planning.

This workshop promoted networking among planners and identification of areas of collaboration and advocacy for priority issues such as job

creation to address the prevailing high unemployment situation. Policy implications such as the hiring freeze in government were highlighted as some of the bottlenecks leading to poor service delivery across sectors.

The participation of the Chief Economist from the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development was the highlight of the workshop as he provided strategic guidance on how to package programmes to convince the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) to fund them. .



## Eswatini hosts knowledge exchange visit on TuneMe success



*The Zambia delegation poses with UNFPA Head of Office, Margaret Thwala-Tembe, Nanikie Mnisi the Under Secretary of the MoSCYA, Bheki Thwala, Director of Youth Affairs and the ENYC team.*

UNFPA Eswatini Country Office welcomed a delegation from the Republic of Zambia for a knowledge exchange mission on the TuneMe platform from the 30th April 2023 to 07 May 2023.

The South-South learning enabled both countries to deepen their understanding and ideas on improving youth engagement through the platform. The TuneMe platform which is part of the Safeguard Young People (SYP) programme, promotes access to sexual and reproductive health information by young people aged 10 to 24 years. SYP is implemented across 10 countries including (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

At its launch in June 2017, TuneMe was running as a mobisite which limited access to its use by the youth. To promote its access to young people, in 2021, UNFPA Eswatini developed an Application for TuneMe which has been running and customized which the Zambian team learned from during their mission. In Zambia, TuneMe currently runs

on a mobisite which is challenging for young people to access, create user accounts, and search for desired content/information. The management and development of a Tune Me mobile phone application will be address these challenges in Zambia.



*The delegation during one of their discussions.*



## Making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030



***Gebeni High School choral choir rendering a song during the commemoration.***

*This year's Menstrual Hygiene (MH) Day themed "Making menstruation a normal fact by 2030" was commemorated on the 2nd of June 2023 at eGebeni high school, Manzini region.*

*This was a partnership between UNFPA, the Ministry of Health and other development partners including Georgetown and AIDS Health care Foundation. A total of 450 dignity packs were distributed to learners (boys and girls) in the school.*

*"The dignity pack I have received comes at a time when I needed it the most," stated Andile Dlamini, a form 5 student at the school.*

*During the event, UNFPA Eswatini stated that "In delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled; We promote equal opportunities for young people regardless of their sex and geographic location.*

*During the commemoration, the Boys in the school also expressed their views on getting information on menstrual hygiene. "We appreciate the opportunity to learn about menstruation, hygiene and the importance of having the knowledge about it.*

*Now we will be better able to support our sisters during their menstrual period. "We now understand that menstruation is a natural process." Maqhawe, a student at eGebeni said.*

*Through the ASRH Coordinator Ms Zandile Masangane, the Ministry of Health explained the importance of commemorating Menstrual Hygiene Day. "Everything that we are doing today is a build up for the year 2030. We want to achieve our SDGs and we are happy that you young people are here. This year is different as boys will also*



*benefit because part this year's theme is about promoting hygiene which is why boys will also receive their hygiene packs. The aim is not to leave anyone behind."*

*A drama group from AIDS Health Foundation (AHF) provided edutainment on accessibility and non-discrimination of girls during their menstrual periods. Some of the key messages from their play were;*

*"Pads should be available in schools"*

*"Pads should be tax free"*

*"Pads should be available for free just like condoms"*

*"Menstruation is not a choice, but sex is."*

*The dignity kits for girls contained; a toothbrush, sanitary pads, washing powder, washing towel, toothpaste, deodorant, bath soap and a body lotion, whilst the hygiene kits for boys contained a toothbrush, washing powder, washing towel, toothpaste, deodorant, bath soap and body lotion.*



**Learners from Gebeni High School during the commemoration.**

## UNFPA's participation in the 2023 MTN Bushfire Festival a resounding success



**A young female signing the GBV Charter.**

This year, UNFPA participated in the highly anticipated MTN Bushfire Festival from the 26th to 28th May 2023. The weekend long festival held at Malkerns annually attracted over 20 000 festival goers.

“Through UNFPA’s presence at this widely celebrated event, UNFPA effectively raised awareness about sexual reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and empowered individuals to become advocates for positive change,” Thamary Silindaza, the UNFPA Maternal Health Program Analyst stated.

The festival goers had an opportunity to learn

about UNFPA’s role of UNFPA in Eswatini. UNFPA set up interactive exhibits to educate attendees about GBV and other various human rights violations happening in the country around the world.

This initiative proved to be highly successful in engaging and educating the festival audience, who may not have been previously aware of the extent of human rights abuses in different parts of the world including in Eswatini. In addition to raising awareness, the UNFPA actively advocated for sexual reproductive health rights. Through panel discussions and special sessions;

UNFPA shared information on the CONDOMIZE campaign and emphasized the importance of collective action in ensuring sexual reproductive rights for all.

By forging partnerships and networking with local organizations, UNFPA maximised its efforts towards the achievement of the 7th Country Programme Vision which is reducing preventable institutional maternal mortality in Eswatini by 50% by 2025.

UNFPA participated in the Bushfire Festival in partnership with other UN agencies.





**Mpendulo Masuku from the DPMO in a panel discussion on gender based violence with GTG members and partners.**

In collaboration with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and CSOs Partners (Women in Trade and Development (WITAD), and Kwakha Indvodza), UNFPA Eswatini was able to present information on gender equality.

Through fun-filled engagements, festival attendees engaged with UNFPA's stand to discuss gender quality, the role of women in trade and development, including gender-based violence.

People who visited the stall had an opportunity to learn about UNFPA's efforts towards ending gender based violence and harmful practises in the Kingdom of Eswatini and beyond.

"I was amazed by the work that UNFPA is doing to advance our sexual reproductive health rights.

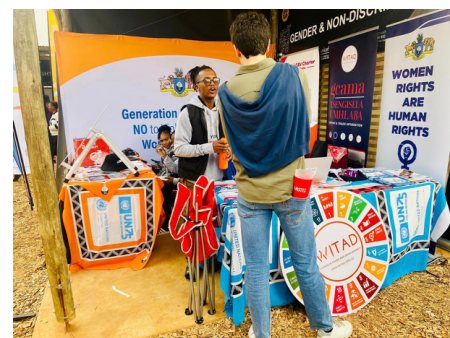
As a Queer person, I am now at ease because I know that there is an agency that is looking out for my health and my rights," Simmele Gule who was at the festival commented.

The Bushfire networking opportunity was valuable in sharing widely the UNFPA and United Nations' global efforts to tackle gender equality issues, especially GBV.

By educating and empowering communities, UNFPA created a generation of individuals who are aware of gender equality and human rights issues,

some of whom were motivated to take action against violence in their communities.

To sustain the commitment towards ending GBV and harmful practices, some of the individuals who visited the stalls signed the GBV Charter, (statement of commitment) to pledge their support to ending violence making a lasting impact that extends far beyond the 2023 MTN Bushfire festival itself.





## Young people commit to feeding the nation through Agriculture



**Queen Dzimba poses with the Deputy Prime Minister, Senator. Themba Masuku and Minister of Agriculture Hon. Jabulani Mabuza at the summit.**

*“It was a great event. Sharing experiences with other young people, especially those who have already made it in agriculture really motivated us young farmers,” stated Queen Dzimba reflecting on her experience from attending the Agri Youth Indaba.*

*Queen is not your average 23-year-old. She is a farmer, a public speaker, and a poet. She is also a role model to other young people who want to*

*pursue a career in agriculture, especially those with disabilities. Queen hails from Dvokolwako, in the Hhohho region of Eswatini. She is currently involved in vegetable production under the Women Farmer Foundation, and wishes to see her agri-business expand and meet the demands of both the local and international markets. But, Queen’s journey as a farmer was not easy. She faced many challenges*

*along the way, such as lack of access to land, water, seeds, and markets.*

*Attending the Indaba calmed her fears.*

*She also faced discrimination and stigma because of her disability. Queen has albinism, a condition that affects the color of her skin, hair, and eyes. Queen did not let these challenges stop her from pursuing her passion for agriculture.*

*She said that she “always wanted to learn new things and improve my skills.” One of the most memorable events that Queen attended was the first Youth and Agriculture Indaba hosted on the 22nd – 23rd June 2023.*

*The Indaba was a two-day event that brought together over 500 young farmers from different backgrounds and regions of Eswatini under the theme, “Empowering youth agri-preneurs through innovation.”*

*The Indaba was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture with support from UN Agencies, FAO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, and WFP and government parastatals such as the National Agriculture Marketing Board.*





**Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture, UNFPA Head of Office, UNICEF Deputy Rep, FAO Assistant Rep, and CEOs of Agriculture related organisations at the National Youth and Agriculture Indaba.**

*At the Indaba, Queen had the opportunity to share her story as a young farmer and the challenges she faced. She also learned from other speakers and participants about the opportunities and resources that are available for young farmers in Eswatini. She said that the Indaba “opened my eyes” and “inspired me” to “continue working hard and learning from my mistakes.”*

*One of the key lessons that Queen learned from the Indaba was that “as a young farmer, you should not be afraid to start small.” She stated that “starting small is not an issue, as long as you are willing to work hard and learn from your mistakes.” She further mentioned that she “wishes to*

*have another similar event in future where we can look back and say this is how we have progressed since the last summit.” Queen is optimistic about the future of agriculture in Eswatini.*

*She said that she hopes that more young people will join agriculture and contribute to its growth and development.*

*“I want to be an example for other young people with disabilities who want to participate in agriculture and achieve their dreams.” she added.*

*Among the participants were young people with disabilities from the Federation of Disabilities Swaziland (FODSWA).*

*These young people had various disabilities, such as visual impairment, auditory impairment, and albinism.*

*The inclusion of young people with disabilities in the Indaba showed that everyone has a place in agriculture, regardless of their abilities.*



**Lungelo Bhembe, UNFPA PA- ASRH making a presentation during the summit**

## Eswatini Unveils Advisory Council For Persons With Disabilities

On the 5th of April 2023, the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr George Wachira, UNFPA, and UNICEF joined the Deputy Prime Minister Senator Themba Masuku in the inauguration of the National Advisory Council for persons with disabilities in the Kingdom of Eswatini at Ekwetsembeni Special School in Mbabane.



**Deputy Prime Minister Senator Themba Masuku with UN Resident Coordinator Mr George Wachira and learners from Ekwetsembeni School during the inauguration.**

The UN in Eswatini in partnership with the DPMO is currently implementing a 2-year project funded through the United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD).

The enactment of this National Advisory Council forms part of the activities of the UNPRPD project which seeks to operationalize the Eswatini National Disability Act of 2018 by providing proper coordination and monitoring mechanisms for disability mainstreaming across all sectors and levels in Eswatini.

In his remarks, the Resident Coordinator highlighted the importance of having the National Advisory Council as a means of safeguarding wellbeing of persons with disabilities in Eswatini. He noted that persons

persons with disabilities are made vulnerable by a number of challenges, including the risk of sexual violence and exploitation.

According to the UNPRPD Situation Analysis, women and girls with disabilities are at a higher risk to fall victim to sexual exploitation and rape due to their vulnerability and possibly reduced chances that their perpetrators will be ever prosecuted," stated Wachira.

He urged all stakeholders working on disability issues to adapt new ways to better the lives of all persons with disabilities in Eswatini.

"We must harness technological advancements for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

We can do more to acquire and adopt affordable assistive technologies to improve lives of persons with disabilities from pre-school, school and after school," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister described the inauguration as a symbolic day in Eswatini for persons with disabilities.



*“This also creates a positive platform for the country to look back, take stock and celebrate progress achieved over the years towards progressively addressing and redressing issues of persons with disabilities,” Masuku said. He urged the new council members to “go and be servants of the nation.”*

*Mr Thembinkosi Dlamini, the Executive Director for the Coordinating Assembly of Non-government organisations (CANGO), urged all partners to make disability a priority to ensure that no one is left behind in issues of development in the country.*

*“Mainstreaming disability is not a matter of charity but a matter of rights. Let us work together and support all the initiatives done to make the lives of those with disabilities better,” he said.*

*The members of the advisory council are:*

- Dr Ngcebo Mbuli – Chairperson
- Professor Hebron Ndlovu – Vice Chairperson
- Dr Advocate Dlamini – Member
- Ms Ncamsile Buthelezi – Member
- Mr Philemon Gama – Member
- Mr Makhosini Makhubu – Member
- Chief Lodlakama Dlamini – Member and,
- Mr Macusi Shongwe – Ex Officio Member.



**UN RC Mr George Wachira and Deputy Prime Minister Senator Themba Masuku with handcrafts sold by learners at the school.**



**The National Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities**

*In his acceptance speech, Dr Mbuli, who is currently the CEO of Bible Society, acknowledged that the task bestowed upon them was huge and required all collaboration among different stakeholders in Eswatini.*

# UN Eswatini supports increased participation of persons with disabilities in 2023 national elections

*By Sibusiso Mngadi*

*The Government of Eswatini, through the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, hosted a consultative meeting to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in the national elections in Eswatini. The consultative meeting, supported under the United Nations Programme for Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) Project, was hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Themba Masuku.*

*It was attended by representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities, including the Federation of Persons with Disabilities (FODSWA), national advisory council as well as the Elections and Boundaries Commission.*

*In his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister urged the Elections and Boundaries Commission to make sure that infrastructure for the election process is accessible for all persons with disabilities. He also urged persons with disabilities to embark on lobbying to get seats in parliament. "The 59 Members of Parliament who are elected from Tinkhundla then elect 10 Senators. This is an opportunity for you to lobby them to include persons with disabilities in this process," he said. UNFPA Head*

*of Office, Margaret Thwala-Tembe, noted that the inclusion of persons with disabilities in political decision-making was essential to the achievement of Agenda 2030 of the SDGs. "For the world to achieve the Sustainable development goals, every citizen including persons with disabilities must play a part," she said. "That's why we need voices of persons with disabilities where decisions are made, and their capacities are built to continue and lead in their communities during this time of elections," she added. "A majority of persons with disabilities are also poor which*

*makes it difficult for them to campaign successfully," said Bongani Makama, FODSWA President. He also requested the Deputy Prime Minister to lobby the appointing authority to consider persons with disabilities when making political appointments. "All we are asking for is 10 percent of political appointees be persons with disabilities," said Makama during the event.*



**UNFPA Head Office Margaret Thwala-Tembe with FODSWA President Bongani Makama, Deputy Prime Minister Senator Themba Masuku, EBC Commissioner Dr Njabu Dlamini, Dr Ngcebo Mbuli Chairperson of the National Advisory Council of Persons With Disabilities.**





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