

## Namibia Celebrates World Prematurity Day

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019, more than 500 people across Oshana region gathered to celebrate World Prematurity Day in Namibia. The day was officiated by the Ministry of Health and Social Services under the global theme “Born too Soon: Providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place”, with technical and financial support from UNICEF Namibia.

Speaking at the event the Honorable Minister of Health and Social Services, Dr. Kalumbi Shangula, highlighted the government’s continued commitment in putting systems in place to ensure that no child dies because of being born prematurely.

In a country where 54% of neonatal deaths are due to prematurity and Low Birth Weight, the Government of Namibia, through the Ministry of Health and Social Services, have committed to reduce the maternal mortality ratio to 200 per 100,000 livebirths and the neonatal mortality ratio to 10 per 1,000 by 2022.

While the success in the reduction of both maternal and neonatal mortality requires sustained and significant planning, sound technical know-how and appropriate equipment, it remains important to establish proper monitoring to enable babies survive and thrive.

Speaking on behalf of the UNICEF Country Representative, Ms. Rachel Odede, Ms. Gloria Siseho said “To successfully implement the much-needed emergency high quality care to ensure the best start for the baby, we as development partners must support the government by putting enough financial, as well as technical, resources together – in the long run curbing the complications that comes with preterm birth.”

The celebrations of WPD commemoration focused on the benefits of kangaroo mother care and testimonials from mothers of premature babies who practiced and advocate for this high impact low cost intervention to save preterm babies.

Mothers of premature babies were presented with kangaroo wrappers to keep their babies warm. The region also adopted a slogan of “knit one, warm one and save one”.



FLTR -- Gloria Siseho, UNICEF Health Specialist, Hon. Kalumbi Shangula, Minister of Health, Elia Irimari, Governor of Oshana region, Johanna Haimene, Regional health director of Oshana region and Oshakati hospital Senior Medical Officer during WPD2019



Gloria Siseho, UNICEF Namibia Health Specialist, delivering a speech on behalf of UNICEF Representative, Ms. Rachel Odede



Mothers practicing KMC - Oshakati hospital-Namibia during 2019 WPD



Hon. Kalumbi Shangula, Minister of Health delivering keynote address during WPD2019



Mother giving testimony on kangaroo mother care (KMC)



Minister distributing gifts during 2019 WPD in Namibia, northern Oshana region.