



**Republic of Namibia**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**BY**

**DR. RICHARD NCHABI KAMWI, MP  
MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**at the Official Opening of the Discussion Forum on  
the Integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health  
and HIV/AIDS**

NAMPOWER Convention Centre, Windhoek, on [Windhoek](#)

**7<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

UNFPA Representative,  
UNICEF Representative,  
WHO Representative,  
UNAIDS Representative,  
Dr. Hugues Lago, IPPF Representative  
Sam Ntelamo, NAPPA Country Director  
Michael Mulondo, NANASO National Director  
Government Civil Servants,  
Namibia Global Fund Programme Representative,  
Members of the Press,  
Distinguished invited guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen;

I am delighted to be standing in front of you this morning, and am deeply honoured to officially open today's discussion forum. The topic on the integration of Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS is perhaps more pressing than ever.

I believe it is time to agree and implement concrete actions that enhance our reproductive health and HIV/AIDS services. It is my hope that the discussions this morning will clarify and elaborate ways how this can best be done in our Namibian setting.

I would like to reiterate, however, that reproductive health and HIV/AIDS cannot be completely separated.

Integration of services is an important policy goal of my Ministry. Access to HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health services at so called “**one stop service centres**” is also our aim.

This implies that when our citizens visit a health facility to access ARV treatment, they should also be offered services regarding family planning, VCT, safe sex education, antenatal care, STI treatment and even other services such as treatment of tuberculosis. This explicitly confirms why integration of Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS is important and proper in terms of improving access, availability and responsiveness of our services to our clients.

I would like, to also underline that all stakeholders should join hands to promote the integration approach. Engaging discussions such as this - that will culminate in a better understanding of the challenges faced and best ways to address them therefore is very welcome.

In addition, it is important that as you deliberate on this important topic, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that women, girls and all those vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS epidemic are fully aware of our National HIV/AIDS Policy. Issues of stigma and discrimination are most notable challenges that we ought to eliminate at all cost.

At the same time, the common trend of male dominance on the one hand and lack of male involvement in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS solutions on the other hand cannot be tolerated at all. Therefore we need to share work towards developing a common understanding and knowledge regarding the rights of everybody.

Ladies and gentlemen, civil society has an important role to play by encouraging and educating women and girls (and the entire society) to make active and informed choices. Civil society organisations have important networks in Namibia that can assist our national efforts in reaching our communities. As Government, we support and cordially recognise your work.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the joint support of the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association and NANASO - in complimenting efforts of my Ministry in promoting all aspects of reproductive health in Namibia.

Once again, I wish you fruitful deliberations. It is now my distinct honour to officially declare the discussion forum initiated by NAPPA and NANASO open.

I thank you.