



Republic of Namibia  
Ministry of Health and Social Services

Keynote Address

By

Dr Richard Nchabi Kamwi, MP  
Minister of Health and Social Services

At the

Official Opening of the Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal  
Care/Life Saving Skills Training of Trainers Workshop

02<sup>nd</sup> November 2010

Roof of Africa Hotel and Conference Centre  
Windhoek

**P**rogramme Director

**D**eputy Permanent Secretary, MoHSS - Dr. Forster

**W**HO Country Representative - Ms. Magda Robalo

**U**NFPA Country Representative - Mr. Fabian Byomuhangi

**U**NICEF Country Representative - Mr. Ian Macleod

**I**-Tech Country Representative - Ms. Dega Ali

**C**DC Country Director - Mr. Jeff Hanson

**D**ean of UNAM School of Nursing and Public Health –  
Dr. Hoases-Goraseb

**F**ounding Dean, UNAM School of Medicine - Prof. Nyarango

**N**ational Health Training Centre Deputy Director - Ms. Kutenda

**R**egistrar, Health Professions Councils of Namibia - Ms. Barlow

**C**onsultants from the American College of Nurse-Midwives

**M**edical Superintendent, Katutura State Hospital –  
Dr. R.C Gariseb

**M**edical Superintendent, Windhoek Central Hospital –  
Dr. S. Shalongo

**P**articipants of the EmONC training of trainers

**M**embers of the Media

**L**adies and gentlemen

**A**s we all have observed, the plight of women and newborn children has been given considerable attention globally in recent years. In 2000, the Government of Namibia adopted the United

Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and has committed itself to achieve all eight millennium development goals. Two of these goals relate directly to the objectives of this training course and they are "to improve maternal health and reduce child mortality".

**M**aternal and Child Health is among the top priority agenda in Namibia. Therefore this course is highly relevant and timely for the acceleration of the reduction of maternal and child mortality in the country.

### **P**rogramme Director

**A**s you all may know maternal and child mortality in Africa has not shown significant reduction over the last decade. The situation in Namibia is not different. Majority (81.4%) of our pregnant women are delivering in health facilities, despite this fact, our maternal and neonatal death are not showing a declining trend.

**A**ccording to our Health Information System (HIS), three quarters of neonatal deaths in our health facilities take place in the first 7 days of life. The greatest number occurs on the day of delivery or on the day there after, mainly due to premature birth or birth complications.

Similarly, the Emergency Obstetric Care Assessment conducted in 2005/2006, revealed that the direct causes of maternal death in Namibia are a result of obstructed labour, bleeding, infection, eclampsia and prolonged labour. All these maternal complications can also lead to neonatal and infant mortality. This is an indication for us to improve the quality of care during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period.

In response to this challenge, my Ministry established a Roadmap for the provision of quality maternal and neonatal health care services at all levels of health care delivery system. Therefore, this workshop could not have come at an opportune moment than this.

The Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Training of Trainers should eventually contribute to the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality by averting the deaths that are associated with sub optimal care during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period

Our aim is to reverse the trend of increasing maternal mortality and meet the national target of reducing maternal mortality by 3/4<sup>th</sup> and child mortality by 2/3<sup>rd</sup> by 2015. Our Namibian theme: “Namibia cares: no women should die while giving birth” remains relevant and should be the guiding slogan for all of us, who work in the area of maternal and child health.

**D**istinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

**I** was informed that 26 participants from eight regions, including training institutions will be trained as trainers in Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care in order to scale up the training in their respective regions.

**I** was also informed that the course will address the major causes of maternal and neonatal mortality in Namibia based on best practices and evidence based interventions. If we are to make a significant difference in improving the quality of life of mothers and children and ensure their survival, we have to adopt evidence based interventions as recommended by WHO and other credible partners.

**We** acknowledge the need for task shifting and broadening the scope of work of nurses and midwives and provide them the needed knowledge, skills, medicines and supplies they need to perform what they have been thought to do. My Ministry is working on all fronts to ensure that what you have learnt is put into practice.

**D**istinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Dear** participants, after this training I trust you will take your important task of saving maternal and neonatal lives seriously and will be even more committed to rollout this training

to all health workers so that collectively we can be better geared and prepared to reduce maternal and neonatal mortalities in our country.

**F**inally, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to UN agencies particularly WHO for the initiative and leadership in this training, as well as UNFPA, UNICEF, and US Government through CDC/USAID for the generous financial and technical support provided to make this important capacity building a reality. I want to specifically also express my appreciation to the American College of Nurse-Midwives under the leadership of Ms. Diana Beck, for travelling from USA to conduct this important training.

**P**rogramme Director

**D**ear Participants

**I** now have the honor to declare the Life Saving Skills/Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care Training of Trainers Workshop officially open.

