

Debmarmine Namibia celebrated International Women's Day

Debmarmine Namibia celebrated International Women's Day and launched the 'Count-Me-In' HeForShe drive at the same event. The celebration of International Women's Day was celebrated across De Beers under the theme **"Creatively Changing Cultures"**. Debmarmine Namibia commemorated the day together with Namibian Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy, Honourable Kornelia Shilunga and newly appointed United Nations Special Adviser on Africa, Advocate Bience Gawanas, as guest speakers at its staff event.

Debmarmine Namibia Chief Executive Officer Otto Shikongo during the celebration said the company is celebrating the amazing and inspirational women at Debmarmine Namibia in particular. "Women are the bedrock of our society; they are strong and valuable like diamonds. At Debmarmine Namibia, we applaud the talented women who take on challenging careers in the mining industry. We aim to change our mind-sets as regards diversity because we believe that if we take our own product as an example: a diamond has numerous facets, which together create exceptional brilliance. This supports a greater diversity of thought, perspective and ideas that will make us a stronger business. So today, as we celebrate women's day we appreciate that brilliance has many facets".

He added that De Beers ExCo took a stand that gender equality, inclusion and diversity becomes an important strategic priority on all the business agendas of the operations. Further to this commitment, De Beers partnered with UN Women to further the cause of uplifting women and girls. De Beers and UN Women invites people to stand together as equal partners to craft a shared vision of gender equal. Additionally employees and service providers signed up to the 'Count-Me-In' HeForShe drive, which encourages all to stand together for gender equality to benefit everyone.

Applauding Debmarmine Namibia for its efforts, Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy of Namibia, Honourable Kornelia Shilunga said it is gratifying and commendable to see that Debmarmine Namibia and the De Beers Group have identified the importance of gender, diversity and inclusion as an important strategic initiative that is driven at the highest level of the Companies. "I fully support and look forward to the successful implementation and sharing your lessons learned with others bold enough to follow your footsteps. It is even more encouraging to see today, men and women committed to support this noble initiative - this is the first step towards positive change".

United Nations Special Adviser on Africa Advocate Bience Gawanas shared the importance of gender within Namibian cultural context. She stressed that gender is important because men and women can never be the same but that no one should feel left out just because you are the other and that's where inclusivity comes in. "It does not make us the same, it only recognises our differences without using those differences to oppress, exploit or to dehumanise. Gender is important it constantly reminds us of the society in which we live. Most times we are being told we have got many women in position of power. It is not a number's game. It is a values game. It is a game in which I as a woman want to be valued as an equal human being who is intelligent and capable. When we start to apply standards against which we measure each other let it not be the male standard but a human standard. Because at the end of the day it is the value of humanity that makes human. It is not whether you are man or women it is the capacity that you bring at work that makes a difference," she stressed.

At the same occasion, Maenge Shipiki-Kali the Debmarmine Namibia Business Optimisation Manager shared a motivational story of her journey in the mining industry. She acknowledged that

the economic landscape has changed comparing where women were in the past and where they are today.

The emergence of more women in the previously predominately male-dominated mining environment is changing, this is evident in the many programmes being put in place by corporates and government alike.

Debmarine Namibia employee, Zenzi Awases, was recently appointed to serve as President of the Women in Mining Association of Namibia (WiMAN). At the event, she shed more light on WiMAN and its objective to provide one national voice that promotes and empowers women in the mining industry. She encouraged staff members, particularly women, to join the association.

The International Women's Day event was a resounding success. Employees pledged their commitment to 'Count Me In' and provided motivation statements as to the importance of women in mining. The statements and motivations were widely published in the local (Namibian) print and broadcast media.

Photo Caption: Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy Honourable Kornelia Shilunga addressing Debmarine Namibia employees during the celebration of the International Women's Day held at the Debmarine Namibia offices.

Photo Caption 2: Debmarine Namibia employees celebrating the International Women's Day with their 'Count-Me-In' HeForShe commitment board pledge.