



Cancer Association of Namibia

21/81/096 – Incorporated Association not for Gain & Registered Welfare Organization (WO30)

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MEDIA COMMUNICATION **4 February 2026 – World Cancer Day**

“Because Cancer Should Not Turn Worlds Upside Down”

This World Cancer Day, observed on 4 February, the Cancer Association of Namibia (WO30) joins the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and partners around the globe in highlighting how geographical distance and financial hardship continue to prevent many people from accessing timely cancer care. The global call is for a more people-centred approach to cancer services that recognises individuals, not just illnesses.

Namibia’s vast and dynamic landscape, which makes our country unique, also presents one of our greatest healthcare challenges. Access to early screening and accurate diagnosis remains especially difficult in remote and rural communities. Specialist cancer services are largely centralised, requiring many patients to travel thousands of kilometres to Windhoek for treatment. For countless families, the cost and complexity of this journey delay care and deepen vulnerability.

“We acknowledge that receiving the right screening and timely diagnosis in remote settings is difficult,” said Rolf Hansen, CEO of the Cancer Association of Namibia. *“We must therefore embrace technology and innovative service models to bridge the gaps where human capacity is limited. Cancer turns one’s world upside down. It shakes family foundations and tests the strength of communities. Our goal is to balance equitable access to healthcare with compassion, dignity, and financial protection for those affected.”*

United by Unique: People at the Centre of Care

The 2025–2027 World Cancer Day campaign, “United by Unique,” places people and their stories at the heart of cancer care. People-centred care focuses on the needs, values, and active participation of individuals, families, and communities in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health services. It represents a fundamental shift, recognising the person behind the diagnosis, their culture, their socioeconomic reality, and their personal preferences as opposed to only addressing the disease.

“When we listen to people affected by cancer, their experiences reveal what is often missing - clear communication, continuity of care, psychosocial support, and cultural sensitivity,” noted Cary Adams, CEO of UICC. *“Their stories are an invaluable source of knowledge that must shape cancer policies and services alongside clinical evidence.”*

Bringing Care Closer to Communities

In line with this vision, the Cancer Association of Namibia is proud to announce the official opening and handover to the Ministry of Health and Social Services of the Walvis Bay Oncology Centre at the Walvis Bay District Hospital on Monday, 23 February 2026. This important milestone was achieved through the generous support of Langer Heinrich Uranium in partnership with CAN. The initiative included the complete renovation of the former COVID-19 ward, the provision and installation of medical and

pharmaceutical equipment, and specialised training delivered in collaboration with the Dr AB May Cancer Care Centre at Windhoek Central Hospital.

Furthermore, CAN will officially open the Palliative Care Namibia – Erongo Centre in Swakopmund on Friday, 20 February 2026, expanding holistic support for patients and families in the region.

“These are meaningful steps to bring people to the heart of healthcare,” Hansen affirmed. “Timely interventions—from screening and diagnosis to treatment and palliative care—must become accessible realities for all Namibians, not privileges for a few.”

UICC President Ulrika Årehed Kågström emphasised the broader impact: *“People-centred care is not theoretical. Systems that respond to real needs deliver better outcomes, use resources more effectively, and strengthen trust. These examples must become the standard, not the exception—and that requires political will.”*

About World Cancer Day

Led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) every 4 February, World Cancer Day is a global initiative to raise awareness of cancer risks and to promote actions that improve prevention, early detection, and treatment. Communities worldwide unite through events and campaigns dedicated to reducing the impact of cancer.

More information: www.worldcancerday.org/map

About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

Founded in 1933, UICC is the largest international cancer organisation with over 1,150 members in more than 170 countries. Members include cancer societies, research institutes, treatment centres, hospitals, public health agencies, and patient groups. UICC holds consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and official relations with WHO, IARC, IAEA, and UNODC. It is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer, and the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP), and established the City Cancer Challenge Foundation and the ATOM Coalition.

UICC’s mission is to unite and support the cancer community to reduce the global cancer burden, promote equity, and ensure cancer control remains a global health priority.

More information: www.uicc.org

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