



SUCCESS STORY

Fight Against HIV/AIDS Coordinated from New Office Complex



New office buildings enhance the Southern Sudan AIDS Commission's capacity to coordinate a multi-sector response to HIV/AIDS.

USAID/OTI supports rapid government action to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS in southern Sudan.

August 2007 – Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, the late Vice President of Sudan, John Garang, accurately predicted that HIV/AIDS would become the region's biggest enemy. Currently, an increase in trade with neighboring countries, combined with a flood of refugees returning home, has led to an unprecedented amount of cross-border movement. Many of the country's trading partners to the south, such as Kenya and Uganda, suffer from higher levels of HIV infection than Sudan, and as a consequence of increased interaction, HIV infection rates in southern Sudan are rising. The HIV infection rate among pregnant women has reached 12 percent at some health centers. In addition,

the people of southern Sudan have little understanding of HIV/AIDS and how it is transmitted. The situation exposes a tragedy in the making for a region emerging from more than 20 years of war.

With funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently provided prefabricated offices for the newly established Southern Sudan AIDS Commission (SSAC). Prior to the receipt of the assistance, the commission was working out of a small, dilapidated building in Juba. The new office compound allows the SSAC to focus on its mandate of coordinating a multi-sector response to HIV/AIDS.

Recognizing that the commission needed other resources to mount an effective campaign, USAID/OTI has also provided bathroom facilities, office furniture, equipment, and supplies.

The SSAC, together with national and international partners, is developing a national strategic framework for HIV/AIDS that will combine the efforts of communities, civil society organizations, and government agencies under a single agenda. As part of this effort, action plans will be developed to address the problem at various levels. The USAID/OTI assistance will enable the SSAC to respond – within a rapidly shrinking time frame – with efforts to sustain the low rates of HIV infection in southern Sudan.