

**Remarks by Ambassador Joyce A. Barr
Launching of Ambassador's Girls' Scholarship Program
July 7, 2005 09:00 am
Aris Primary School**

Honorable Mbumba, Minister of Education;
Mrs. Goagoses, Deputy Director, Khomas Education Region;
The Right Rev. Dr. Kameeta, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic
of Namibia;
Mr. Folcher, Principal of Aris Primary School;
Our Implementing Partners;
Girl Scholars;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very happy to be here with you today to participate in the launch of the Girls' Scholarship Program. We are hopeful that the scholarships offered under this program will make it possible for these girls to complete their primary education, and give them the confidence and commitment to be successful at higher levels of education.

The Girls' Scholarship Program is part of a key U.S. program called the Africa Education Initiative. Earlier, through a similar program called the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative, we were able to provide 500 scholarships that helped girls from throughout Namibia complete their primary and secondary education.

The new scholarship program that we are launching today, will support 950 girls over the next three years with school uniforms, school supplies, boarding and lodging fees, mentoring, and psycho-social support. Each recipient will receive approximately N\$900 in support each year. We are making this contribution to girls' education in Namibia because we strongly believe that educating girls will give them the tools to be productive members of Namibian society.

This program is a key element in the overall basic education strategy that the USG supports in Namibia through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This strategy aims to, "...increase the capacity of the basic education system to give learners the foundations for health and livelihood," and focuses on improving the quality of education in language, math, and science for grades 1 – 7. The strategy also provides support to help the Namibian basic education system to cope with the effects of HIV and AIDS.

Namibia is a focus country under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The Emergency Plan supports Namibia's HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care program, including care and support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children. The Girls' Scholarship Program complements the Emergency Plan by supporting the education needs of vulnerable girls – many orphaned by HIV and AIDS.

To the promising young women present here this morning: we are very happy to be able to help you! With an education, you will have more choices, and you will be in a better position to support and develop your families, your communities, and your country.

I would like to thank our three excellent implementing partners—the Forum for African Women Educationists in Namibia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia AIDS Program, and the National Federation of People with Disabilities in Namibia, for taking the lead in implementing this program in different regions of Namibia.

We value your insights and cooperation and are honored to be your partner.

Thank you.