

**Remarks by
Gary Newton, Director of the United States Agency
for International Development Namibia
Official Dedication of the Cheetah Conservation Fund's Bushblok Factory
March 2, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.
Otjiwarongo**

Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Paul Smit

Honorable Governor of the Otzondjupa Region, Theophelius Eiseb

His Worship the Mayor of Otjiwarongo, Councillor Otto Ipinge

Cheetah Conservation Fund Representatives

Honored Community Leaders

On behalf of Ambassador Barr, who cannot be here today, I'd like to take this opportunity to express the admiration of all of us on the Ambassador's team in Namibia for the outstanding work of the Cheetah Conservation Fund. As Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development in Namibia, it is a pleasure and an honor to be associated with such a great cause and a great group of people.

The U.S. Government has been associated with the Cheetah Conservation Fund since October 1, 2001, when a US\$1 million grant was awarded to CCF through USAID for a four-year program. The program, as you are well aware, is intended to help Namibia's cheetah population survive and thrive through the promotion of cheetah conservation, the education of farmers and the improvement of cheetah habitat.

Since 1991, as one of the implementers in Namibia of U.S. Government assistance, USAID has been the conduit for over US\$150 million to help Namibia address five national priorities:

1. fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic;
2. strengthening democracy and governance;
3. improving rural livelihoods through “community-based natural resource management”
4. improving basic education – especially in math, science and English; and
5. creating jobs

The Bushblok Factory we officially dedicate today represents a creative and we hope a job-generating and profitable approach to the protection and preservation of cheetah habitat.

“All creatures great and small” benefit from the Bushblok initiative:

- Bushblok benefits the cheetah of Namibia who thrive as they are able to live and hunt on their natural habitat cleared of encroaching bush;
- Bushblok benefits the indigenous flora of Namibia which thrive as the stranglehold of encroaching invader bush is loosened;
- Bushblok benefits its buyers worldwide as an environmentally-friendly source of warmth;

- And most importantly, Bushblok benefits the good people of Namibia by creating jobs. Jobs for entrepreneurs, managers, marketers, harvesters, chippers, and factory workers.

We are pleased to see the importance devoted to workers' health and safety on the farm and in the factory, and we are impressed by and fully support your HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in the workplace.

Congratulations to Dr. Laurie Marker, Dr. Bruce Brewer and your excellent team. We hope that Bushblok will be a successful and profitable Namibian business that brings Bushblok to fireplaces far and wide and in the process generates jobs and saves the cheetah.