

Remarks
U.S. Government Representative
Gary Newton, USAID/Namibia Mission Director
Roundtable Pledging Conference
Government of Namibia and Development Partners
Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP)
19-20 April 2006
Safari Hotel Conference Center

- Right Honorable Nahas Angula, Prime Minister
- Honorable Dr. Libertina Amathila, Deputy Prime Minister
- Honorable Nangolo Mbumba, Minister of Education
- Honorable John Mutorwa, Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture
- Honorable Helmut Angula, Director General of the National Planning Commission
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Development Partner colleagues
- Members of the Business Community
- Friends from the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honor and pleasure to represent the United States Government at this conference.

First and foremost, we would like to compliment the Ministry of Education. We appreciate the careful planning and broad consultations that have marked the ETSIP process, and we thank you for the opportunity to participate in this historic initiative.

We are optimistic about the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP).

Optimistic because it is backed by strong political will. The allocation of an additional N\$100,000,000 for ETSIP in the Government budget for each of the next three years attests to the importance attached to this initiative.

We're also optimistic because the initiative is driven by a healthy sense of dissatisfaction. Namibia has demonstrated the ability to achieve results on a national scale in the education sector, notably in terms of expanding access, but you're not satisfied. This sense of dissatisfaction is good for the children of Namibia. You want to give them more, and you will.

There has been a *spirited public discourse* on how to improve the quality, equity, efficiency and relevance of education in Namibia. When it comes to education it seems everyone is an "expert". Everyone has an opinion. This is true everywhere. You have listened patiently to Parents, the Press, the Private sector, Ph. D's, Parliamentarians,

Partners-in-Development, and just plain People. And, you have incorporated the best ideas and advice in your plan.

We support your plan, and we support the phased approach to implementing it; we support the identification of “CRITICAL SECTOR PRIORITIES” for the first phase, and we agree with the priorities themselves. Now the challenge will be prioritizing the priorities.

How the U.S. Government will support ETSIP

The United States Government (USG) has been a long-time supporter of education and training in Namibia, and our support will continue.

U.S. Government support focuses primarily on the following ETSIP priorities:

- improving the quality of basic education;
- strengthening the system’s response to HIV/AIDS;
- vocational education and training; and,
- improving equity in education.

In the text of these remarks we have noted the specific ETSIP objective or component addressed by our assistance.

Three USG agencies will provide assistance in support of ETSIP:

- the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID);
- the U.S. Department of State; and,
- the U.S. Peace Corps.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID):

USAID provided approximately N\$304 million (U.S. \$50.6 million) for education in Namibia from 1991 through 2005.

Subject to the availability of funds, a standard USG caveat, USAID plans to provide N\$97 million (U.S. \$16,23 million) between 2006 and 2010 in support of ETSIP.

Assistance will be provided under six programs, three on-going and therefore *previously announced*, and three *not previously announced*, and therefore “new”.

The three on-going programs are:

- N\$59.8 million (US\$9.97) million over four years (2006/2007 – 2009/2010) through our *Basic Education Support* program, popularly known as “BES”, to:
 - develop a system for assessing learner and system performance;
 - improve pre-service and in-service teacher training and professional development;
 - improve curricula for and the teaching of English, mathematics, science; and,
 - help build management capacity under a decentralized basic education system.

The BES program focuses on the previously disadvantaged in six education regions in the North. [*General Education Sub-program, Strategic Objective 1*]

- N\$4.2 million (US\$700,000) over two years (2006-2007) under the International Federation for Education and Self-Help [IFESH] program to improve teacher training by posting volunteers with expertise in teacher training on the faculty of Teacher Training Colleges. [*Tertiary Education and Training sub-program, Strategic Objective A*]
- N\$3.6 million (US\$608,000) over two years (2006-2007) under the Africa Education Initiative's *Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program* to provide bursaries and other support to 950 Orphaned or Vulnerable girls to enable them to complete grade 7. [*the broad ETSIP priority of improving equity in education under the HIV/AIDS sub-program, Component 2*].

The three new, not previously announced programs are:

- N\$15,1 million (US\$2.5 million) over three years (2006 – 2008) under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to help Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) go to school, stay in school and do well in school. [*HIV/AIDS Sub-program, Component 2*].
- N\$3,6 million (US\$600,000) over three years (2006-2008) under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief for 750 bursaries and other support to Orphaned or Vulnerable girls to enable them to complete 10th grade. [*HIV/AIDS sub-program, Component 2*]
- N\$11,1 million (US\$1.8 million) over three years (2006-2008) under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to provide vocational and leadership training to youth and young adults who are OVC. [*Vocational Education and Training sub-program, Objective E*]

U.S. State Department

The U.S. State Department plans to continue its annual US\$500,000 program of support for short- and long-term academic and professional educational exchange programs, focusing primarily on tertiary-level needs.

The first Namibian recipient of the U.S. State Department's Fulbright fellowship program graduated with a Ph.D. in political science in 1984. Since before independence, the State Department has supported education and training programs for over 200 Namibians. Since 1990, over \$10 million has been provided for Namibians to learn in the U.S. and American scholars to contribute to Namibian education.

[Higher Education Sub-program, Strategic Objective A Component 4, which is aimed at building capacity for graduate studies and research.]

U.S. Peace Corps

The U.S. Peace Corps plans to continue to support the Ministry of Education by providing 70-80 volunteers to teach English, math, science and computer in grades 7-12, primarily in rural communities.

The U.S. Peace Corps has been providing volunteer teachers to the education sector since 1990 when the Right Honorable Prime Minister, then Minister of Education, initiated the Peace Corps program in Namibia. The Peace Corps Education Program highlights teacher development and includes the placement of volunteers at government schools to help alleviate teacher shortages, at teacher resource centers to provide direct in-service training to teachers, and at regional education offices to build the capacity of Regional AIDS Committees in the Education sector. *[General Education subprogram, Strategic Objective A, Component 2]*

Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)

We would also like to mention the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). As many of you know, due to Namibia's progress over the past 16 years in terms of "Ruling Justly", "Investing in People" and "Economic Freedom", Namibia was one of three Lower Middle Income Countries worldwide selected as eligible to compete for MCA assistance. Working in partnership with civil society and the private sector, we understand the Government of the Republic of Namibia is preparing a proposal that focuses on lifting the primary constraints to economic growth and poverty reduction. The Millennium Challenge Corporation made it clear that MCA grant assistance could support any sector that promotes economic growth for poverty alleviation.

This conference is seen by all of us as part of an on-going dialogue between the education ministry and your many friends and supporters. We'd like to request the following four ETSIP activities be put on the agenda for a future discussion. We think they are particularly important:

1. Fully fund, staff, roll-out, and mainstream a model HIV/AIDS prevention education program for all learners -- as appropriate to their age and needs. i.e. use the tremendous power and reach of the nation's education system to teach children and young people how to protect themselves from HIV. *[i.e. HIV/AIDS sub-program Component 1: Prevention]*
2. Accelerate collaboration with sister Ministries to implement sustainable policies and programs that help Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) go to school, stay in school, and do well in school. One priority would be to activate the Education Development Fund to reimburse schools whose Development Funds are depleted

because so many of their learners are exempt from – or simply can not pay – into the fund; improving *quality* in schools with such meager per capita resources must be exceedingly difficult. [*i.e HIV/AIDS sub-program Component 2: Treatment, Care and Support*]

3. Fully fund, staff and roll-out a workplace prevention, care and treatment program for the Ministry of Education’s 20,000 employees. The success of ETSIP relies upon reducing the impact of the AIDS epidemic on the education workforce. [*i.e. HIV/AIDS sub-program Component 4: Managing the HIV/AIDS response*]
4. Strengthen the partnership between the Ministry of Education and the private sector to align the education system more closely and more quickly with the current and future needs of the economy. [*i.e. Vocational Education and training sub-program,, Strategic Objective E, Component 7*]

Before closing, we would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to the World Bank and UNDP for the constructive and collegial roles played by them in this process. Thank you.

Finally, the United States Government looks forward to continued collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Namibia and our NGO, private sector, and development partners. Together we can move with more purpose and speed toward the immensely important national goal of improving education in Namibia and transforming Namibia into a knowledge-based society.

Best wishes for the successful implementation of ETSIP.

Thank you.

Notes:

1. USG dollar amounts are “subject to the availability of funds”, a standard USG caveat.
2. Namibian dollar estimates of USG assistance amounts may change with exchange rate fluctuations.