



World AIDS Day 2007
U.S. Government Statement
USAID/Namibia Mission Director, Gary Newton
Ministry of Education Commemoration
Thursday, 29 November 2007 at 9:00 a.m.
Ministry of Education Auditorium, Windhoek

- Ministry of Education leadership:
 - Honorable Minister, Nangolo Mbumba
 - Honorable Deputy Minister, Dr. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo
 - Permanent Secretary, Mr. I.V. Ankama
 - Undersecretary – and Director of Ceremonies -- Alfred Ilukena
 - Undersecretary Justin Ellis
- Teachers
- Union Representatives
- Development Partners from the United Nations
- Friends and Colleagues

This is the 20th World AIDS Day. It focuses on *Leadership*.

The first World AIDS Day was in 1988.

Who knew then, in 1988, that the fight against AIDS would be such a long-term struggle, that behavior change would come so slowly, that two

decades into this we would still be seeking leaders, heroes and heroines in the struggle against AIDS.

All of us need to step-up on the leadership front and do what's urgent, right, fair and humane.

But leadership in the education sector is of particular importance.

The epidemic is having a significant impact on education, and education can have a significant impact on the epidemic.

There's cause for despair when we see in Namibia in 2007 the continued impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers, administrators, learners and parents.

But there's cause for hope when we see the initiatives you are taking in the education sector to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS.

You have developed and are ready to launch today:

- a "Workplace HIV and AIDS Policy for the Education Sector;"
- a *Positive living* booklet with practical information and guidance for employees living with HIV/AIDS; and,
- a support group for teachers affected by HIV/AIDS.

Congratulations to all concerned, and congratulations in advance, for the *leadership* required to fully implement what I understand is a model workplace policy – comprehensive, progressive and aligned with ETSIP.

Representing the American People, from whom *our* resources flow, let me say that the U.S. Government, in cooperation with our Development Partners and our excellent implementing partner, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), remains committed to support you:

- to provide prevention, care and treatment services to Ministry employees;
- to use the tremendous expertise, power and reach of Namibia's education system to teach children and young people how to protect themselves from HIV; and,

- to implement sustainable policies and programs that help Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) *go to school, stay in school, and do well in school.*

We wish all of you who are fighting this disease on behalf of the good people of this great nation, ever greater resolve, determination and success.

Thank you.