

Remarks by U.S. Government Representative
Dalene vd Westhuizen, Program Development Specialist
At the Launch of the Namibian Street Soccer Project
Johnson and Johnson Sport and Health Program
10:00AM, Thursday, February 14, 2008
Eenhana Multi Purpose Youth Center

I am very pleased to be here today for the launch of the Namibian Street Soccer HIV/AIDS sport program. In order to stem the tide on new HIV infections, we must focus on prevention and effective means to get people, particularly young people, to pay attention, learn what they need to know to protect themselves, their families, their communities, and, ultimately, their nation.

Targeting youth through a sport that they love, football, with HIV/AIDS prevention and care messages is an excellent means to this end. I commend our partners, AED and NAWA Sport, for their continued dedication and commitment to effective innovative HIV/AIDS programs. I am particularly pleased that our Namibian partner family has expanded to include the Johnson and Johnson Company. Because of their corporate good will and generous support, Namibia has another important tool to aid its efforts to combat this disease. Thank you.

This launch today illustrates the promise of public/private partnerships and the ability of our partners to impress and garner additional support from respected, US multinational companies such as Johnson and Johnson. AED, working with NAWA Sport, is providing the structure, support and technical expertise that underpin this Johnson and Johnson initiative. Well done.

The United States Government, through USAID and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is proud to provide significant support and technical assistance to AED and NAWA Life Trust.

We have worked in partnership with AED to help orphans and vulnerable children *go to school, stay in school, and do well in school* through addressing basic needs such as nutrition, school uniforms, assistance with fees, counseling and the new, wonderful program to provide after-school sports. New reading books -- written by teachers and students to promote reading and provide life skills lessons -- are now in the hands of students as a result of this partnership. We

also work together to provide support to teachers and education management to deal with the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. The Ministry of Education recently released its groundbreaking HIV/AIDS workplace policy and AED is working with teachers who are HIV positive to create a network of support and information.

Our support and work with NAWA Life Trust enabled them to graduate from a donor-funded *local project* to become a Namibian organization that can compete and account for direct donor support. Their community-based Community Action Fora (CAF) empower communities to come together and educate themselves about prevention, risky behaviors -- such as alcohol and drug abuse -- and how to best care for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Their sports program has really taken off and, most recently, has expanded to include Namibia's prison population. It is so successful that in addition to the Walvis Bay Prison, other prison officials from such diverse areas as Olunu and Gobabis have requested similar programs.

These partnerships have born excellent fruit as I am sure will the partnership we are recognizing today. Again, thank you to Johnson and Johnson for their support. Welcome to the coalition of public, faith-based and private sector organizations helping Namibian youth, primarily boys, to recognize behavioral risks and make responsible life decisions. We look forward to the near-term and, we hope, future benefits of this partnership, remembering that girls love football too!