

**Remarks by U.S. Government Representative
Gary Newton, USAID/Namibia Mission Director
National World TB Day Commemoration 2007
“*TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere*”
Friday 23 March 2007
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Helao Nafidi Trade Fair Center, Omafo Village
Ohangwena Region**

- The Honorable Minister of Health and Social Services (MOHSS), Dr. Richard Kamwi
- Hon. Governor of Ohangwena Region, Usko Nghaamwa
- Permanent Secretary MOHSS – and Director of Ceremonies - Dr. Kalumbi Shangula,
- WHO Country Representative, Dr. Custodia Mandlhate
- Global Fund Program Director, Ms Pamela Onyango
- Acting Secretary General, Red Cross Namibia, Ms. Shannon Schroeder
- Development Partners
- Distinguished Invited Guests
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It's an honor and privilege to be with you today to commemorate World TB Day 2007.

World TB Day serves as a reminder, should we need one, of the global threat posed by tuberculosis.

This year's theme, *TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere*, underscores the fact that TB affects all corners of the globe.

Though TB has been curable for more than 50 years, it persists as a widespread and terrible problem in our world, a problem that imposes a heavy burden, often on those least able to afford yet another burden.

In Namibia, we can't talk about TB without in the same breath, talking about HIV/AIDS. Many people have both. An estimated 60% of TB patients are HIV positive. For those whose immune systems are weakened by HIV/AIDS, TB is the most common opportunistic infection and the number one cause of death. Early detection and treatment of TB are the most effective means of improving and prolonging the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services, the TB Control Assistance Program (TBCAP), and their partners are fighting this dual epidemic. We congratulate you on the progress made since we were together in Gobabis on World TB Day in 2006:

- you have increased the TB treatment success rate from 70% in 2004 to 75% in 2005;
- TB cases notified per hundred thousand population decreased from 809 in 2005 to 765 in 2006;
- you have increased the proportion of TB patients tested for HIV from 16% in 2005 to 30% in 2006;
- TB screening is now a standard-of-care for all patients seen in ART clinics; and,
- regions have established regular quarterly review meetings, creating a forum to enhance TB-HIV collaboration.

There is much more work to be done, and impeding an already difficult task is the specter of drug resistant TB.

Of special concern is eXtreme drug resistant TB, which is virtually untreatable and almost universally fatal to people who are HIV-positive.

The threat of eXtreme drug resistant TB is real. There was a deadly outbreak in South Africa, and cases have been reported in many other countries.

This month, experts from your Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Namibia Institute of Pathology attended a high-level meeting on TB in Washington D.C. The meeting was sponsored by the U.S. Government, the Gates Foundation, and the Stop TB Partnership. Experts from Namibia joined colleagues from five other countries to discuss how to accelerate integrated responses to TB and HIV/AIDS and the looming problem of multi-drug and extreme drug resistance.

Honorable Minister, as a development partner supporting Namibia's fight against both HIV/AIDS and TB, we are ready to assist in whatever we can to build on the momentum generated by Namibia's participation in this recent meeting in Washington.

We are ready to help your Ministry and the National Steering Committee for TB to:

- study and understand better the extent of TB drug resistance in Namibia;
- prevent extreme drug resistant TB by improving Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course (DOTS) and management of multiple drug resistant TB;
- further improve case detection, follow-up of household contacts, and lab capacity;
- develop a plan to ensure Namibia has the human resources required to aggressively fight and subdue the TB and HIV epidemics; and,
- mobilize additional resources for TB/HIV.

The United States Government (USG) is providing substantial funding to support TB prevention and treatment worldwide. USG resources are provided through the Centers for Disease Control, USAID, the Global Fund, WHO, and other agencies and organizations.

In Namibia, through 2006, N\$14 million dollars (US \$2 million dollars) have been provided by USAID, and N\$4.1 million (US \$580,000) under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

In 2007, we expect to provide an additional N\$8.4 million (US \$1.2 million dollars) through USAID, and an additional N\$11.2 million (US \$1.6 million) under the Emergency Plan.

Our grant funding supports the expansion and strengthening of TB treatment, improvements in drug quality and availability, the training of health workers, the provision of laboratory supplies and equipment, the engagement of communities and the private sector in TB care, and promoting integration between TB and HIV programs.

In closing, on this day, when we focus on the formidable challenge and threat posed by TB, 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.