



**Remarks by USAID/Namibia Mission Director Gregory Gottlieb
At the Launch of 5 Democracy and Governance Training Manuals
Cabinet Chambers, Parliament building
10:00 am February 10th, 2009**

Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly, Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab;
Honorable members of Parliament;
Secretary to the National Assembly, Mr. Jake Jacobs;
Civil Society Organizations' Participants to the Parliament Networking
Event;
Members of Diplomatic Corps;
Ms. Justine Hunter, NID Executive Director;
Mr. Theunis Keulder, NID Regional Manager;
Representatives of the Media;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to be here today, in partnership with the other stakeholders to this initiative, to launch these five Democracy and Governance training manuals and information booklets -- the Parliamentary Committee Quick Reference Guide; Parliamentary Reporters' Handbook; Guide to the Namibian Budget; Strengthening Political Parties; and the Regional Council and Constituency Handbook.

Honorable Speaker Gurirab, Namibia has made significant progress as a democratic nation in the relatively short time since Independence. I take this opportunity to applaud this progress (cue applause). It is critical for the nation's leadership to continue to promote a vibrant, tolerant and open

democracy. Therefore, I also applaud the words of President Pohamba in his New Year's address to the nation when he said:

“The conduct of free and fair elections is the lifeblood of any democratic system. It is through elections that the electorate can express their preferences for leaders and for policy options and strategies championed by the different political parties.”

The United States Government has been proud to support your efforts and the launch of these manuals today illustrates the ongoing fruits of this successful partnership. It is our hope that these publications will be widely distributed and used, and that they will become an integral part of Civil Society activities throughout Namibia and further promote and strengthen Namibia's democratic institutions. These manuals are key resources and powerful tools to inform and train community leaders, the media, parliamentary staff, Namibian citizens and the future leaders of the country regarding Namibia's democratic institutions and effective democracy and governance practices.

Political stability and peace have been proven to be pillars for sustaining advances in health and education, not to mention opportunities for economic growth. A strong and flourishing democracy is key to achieving Namibia's Millennium Development Goals, Third National Development Plan (NDP3) and Vision 2030.

The U. S. Government, through USAID and its Civil Society Development Program partners, supported the Namibian Government for over 13 years to implement the Democracy and Governance program.

The program ended last year in June and had many successes. Together we:

- Built institutional and advocacy capacity in 65 non-governmental and community-based organizations
- Supported 100 CSO Advocacy Campaigns
- Strengthened the capacity of MPs and Parliamentary staff to perform key functions such as representative and constituency outreach activities
- Launched the “Namibia Democracy Support Center,” one of Namibia’s first indigenous democracy organizations, which trained 402 persons in advocacy and strengthened the connections between local, regional, and national politicians and the constituencies that they represent through 271 meetings. Supported Namibia’s anti-corruption initiatives, including the Anti-Corruption Commission, with training to 1,759 persons through the Zero Tolerance for Corruption Campaign

The American people are proud to support Namibia’s democratic progress and partner with you to strengthen Namibian organizations and leaders to carry the nation forward. Although this specific program has ended, the United States Government remains committed to the further development of democratic institutions and practices in Namibia. We stand ready to assist whenever possible. Continued progress on democracy and governance will reinforce the effectiveness and durability of the Government’s efforts in – and our significant support for -- health care, economic development, and education.

I thank our partners, the Namibian Parliament, the Namibia Democracy Support Center, our NGO partners, and last but not least, the Namibia

Institute for Democracy, for their ongoing work to sustain and continue to build on the important work achieved under the U.S. Government's Democracy and Governance program.

Finally, I again commend the Honorable Speaker and the Namibian leadership, for their commitment to the progress of this nation. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the importance of everyday Namibian citizens' contributions to the governance of their country – they are the foundation upon which this democracy rests. A strong democracy is everyone's responsibility.

I thank you.