

USAID pours money into AIDS fight

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THE United States aid agency USAID has pumped just short of US\$65 000 (about N\$448 000) into the City of Windhoek's HIV-AIDS prevention programmes for the next two years.

Under what is termed a Limited Scope Grant Agreement, the money will pay for specialist and administrative assistance, commodities and support activities under the municipal HIV-AIDS prevention programme.

The partnership agreement states: "Ultimately, USAID and the City of Windhoek hope to create linkages between the activities of youth and labour and the activities of other community groups, and thereby create the environment for an integrated community-based approach to addressing the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Namibia".

Chairperson of the City's Management Committee, Bjorn von Finckenstein, and Chief Executive Officer Martin Shipanga have signed the document.

At Wednesday night's Council meeting, Councillor Ilme Schneider voiced concern that more money would be spent on salaries, travel and other technical support (US\$32 850) than on the actual programme activities (US\$ 31 930).

Her objection comes amid reports that more money is being spent on the support systems of AIDS programmes in Namibia than on helping those affected.

Von Finckenstein said Schneider had raised a valid concern, but that the financial plan was predetermined and could not be altered.

Councillor Elaine Trepper said it was costly to administer such programmes, and it was up to donors to direct how their contributions should be spent.

At present the Municipality's prevention programme consists of two core components: behavioural change and establishing multi-purpose centres.

Activities are mainly directed at school students and the private labour sector.

HIV-AIDS prevention drives by the municipalities of Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Ongwediva and Oshakati, communities where HIV is most prevalent, will also be supported by USAID.