

FINAL REMARKS

BY

HIV/AIDS Prevention Advisor, Ms. Mary Furnivall

AT THE launch of the Rehoboth OVC/HIV/AIDS resource booklet, organised by the
Rehoboth AIDS Association
Origo Primary School, Rehoboth
December 1st 2006 10:10AM

The Distinguished invited Guests

Director of Ceremonies: Mr. Theo Jonkowski;
Mr. Max Boois

Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services: Honourable. Haingura

His Worship the Mayor of Rehoboth: Honourable Cllr G.P. Dax

Hardap Regional HIV/AIDS Coordinator: Mr. Ernest Pienaar

Honourable Regional Councillor of the Rehoboth Urban East Constituency: E.A. Wambo

Catholic Health Services Representative: Dr. Judman

Rehoboth AIDS Association

NGOs; CBOS; FBOs; Volunteers

All Protocol observed

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I represent the United States Government at this World AIDS Day event in Rehoboth, and also participate in the official launching of the "*Rehoboth Resources for HIV/AIDS and orphans and vulnerable children*" booklet. I applaud the contributions that all of you have made to support the Ministry's efforts to achieve "Accountability" under the international theme of: Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise.

This year, Namibia will focus on preventing further spread of HIV among youth. The slogan of: “Zero tolerance to new HIV infections among the youth” rings loud and clear for everyone here today. Namibian youth are key to helping us stop this epidemic.

Through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or “Emergency Plan,” the United States government is responding to the HIV/AIDS challenge in Namibia by channelling \$870 million Namibian dollars since 2004 to support Namibia’s national HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment program. Because Namibia is using these resources well and is achieving significant results, in 2007, there is another expected increase in U.S. assistance of between \$523 million and \$588 million Namibian dollars. This assistance is targeted at:

- prevention activities,
- increased access to treatment
- and, the focus of my remarks today, providing care and services to orphans and vulnerable children, or OVC.

Namibia’s leadership and commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS is strong. The National Plan of Action for OVC reflects the Namibian commitment to meet the growing needs of children affected by HIV/AIDS. The need is great and growing. It is predicted that by the year 2021, there will be more than 250,000 orphans and vulnerable children in Namibia, three quarters of which will have been from AIDS. Ladies and Gentlemen, these children need immediate and sustained support from their communities.

At the national level, the United States Government directly supports the National Plan of Action for OVC. In 2006, under the Emergency Plan, \$33 million Namibian dollars were provided to support its implementation to benefit over 58,000 OVC.

Locally, we are very pleased to work together with the Rehoboth AIDS Association and the Organization for Resources and Training (ORT). Their programs increase community capacity to provide care and support to affected children. ORT's SOS Namibia initiative, conducted in partnership with KAYEC Trust and COSDEC, helps caregivers raise household incomes through vocational and job skills training. It also supports the International Youth Award, which provides older OVC opportunities to learn new skills, increase self-confidence, and receive support and encouragement. So far, 100 youth in Rehoboth have participated in this program, which will continue to expand over the next three years.

In addition to these activities, ORT works with the Rehoboth AIDS Association to help strengthen its capacity to provide quality HIV/AIDS services especially in the areas of information and coordination. Today, as a result of this partnership, we are here to witness the launching of an invaluable community tool -- the *Rehoboth Resources for HIV/AIDS and orphans and vulnerable children* booklet. This booklet will assist caregivers, NGOs, community leaders, and community members with information in English and Afrikaans on HIV/AIDS and OVC service providers. Access to this information will empower community members and facilitate partnerships between service providers.

I would like to conclude by congratulating the Rehoboth AIDS Association and ORT on their achievements so far, and for having produced such a valuable and much needed reference resource for Rehoboth. I would also like to thank the Municipality of Rehoboth and the organizers of today's World AIDS Day event for inviting me to speak today and participate in launching this booklet.