AUGUST 2009 NEWSLETTER

The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

A MONTHLY UPDATE ON THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO TURN THE TIDE AGAINST GLOBAL HIV/AIDS

Secretary Clinton Travels to Africa

In August, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton traveled to seven African countries – Kenya, South Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, and Cape Verde – to speak about the United States' continued commitment to Africa.

Throughout her trip, Secretary Clinton highlighted the fight against global AIDS as a central piece of the foreign policy and global health agenda outlined by President Barack Obama and Secretary Clinton.

During her visits to Angola and South Africa, Secretary Clinton was accompanied by Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. In both countries, Secretary Clinton showcased how the U.S. Government, through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), is working in partnership with nations around the world to combat HIV/AIDS.

In Luanda, Secretary Clinton visited "Hope" hospital, a hospital that treats and cares for Angolans living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Here, Secretary Clinton and Angolan Minister of External Relations Assunção Afonso dos Anjos signed the Angola Partnership Framework to Combat HIV/AIDS."

Through this five-year strategic plan, the two governments and other partners will work together to position Angola to address its HIV epidemic over the long term, supporting the national HIV/AIDS strategy through service delivery, policy reform, and coordinated financial commitments.

Speaking to the importance of Partnership Frameworks, such as the one signed in Angola, Secretary Clinton noted that they will advance PEPFAR's goal of supporting a country-owned response to HIV/AIDS.

"This framework represents a new approach to our government's fight against HIV/AIDS. It emphasizes a bottom-up approach tailored for and by the country we are assisting. It represents an expansion of local capacity and health care systems that can last over time. It represents long-term planning and more intensive pursuit of prevention. It represents the use of measurements to assure effectiveness and accountability. It will allow for greater coordination among the many parties involved in preventing and treating HIV/AIDS," said Clinton.

Photo by State Department

Children perform during the arrival of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the PEPFAR-supported Cullinan Clinic in Johannesburg, South Africa on August 7, 2009.

In South Africa, Secretary Clinton also illustrated PEPFAR's commitment to supporting national leadership during her visit to Cullinan Antiretroviral Therapy Clinic. Funded jointly by the South African Government and PEPFAR, the clinic works to provide accessible

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Radio Debates Raise HIV Awareness among Namibian Youth

In Namibia, the American Cultural Center recently awarded Base FM Radio with a grant supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

This grant will support *HIV/AIDS Khomas School Debate 2009*, a continuing high school debate program working to engage Namibian youth in an on-air HIV/AIDS dialogue and to raise awareness about the disease.

Building on information from a 2007 survey that showed listeners wanted to hear about topics affecting the youth of Namibia, including HIV/AIDS and domestic violence, Base FM developed the debate program and piloted it in 2008. The program quickly became popular among students and radio listeners alike.

The discussions are based loosely on the World Schools Debating Style, which had already been introduced in Namibian schools.

Now in its second year, *HIV/AIDS Khomas High School Debate 2009* will include representation from more schools and students, further expanding the reach of this program. The top 10 debaters will represent the Khomas Region at the National High Schools Debate competition later this year.

Part of the program's success is attributed to the medium on which the discussions are held. Radio is a powerful tool in Namibia because it is readily accessible to people in the country, including individuals most at risk for HIV/AIDS. Understanding this, Base FM will continue to use debates to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in Namibia, and to increase the chances of encouraging HIV/AIDS-related behavior change among youth.

Photo by Namibia PEPFAR Team

A student participates in a PEPFAR-supported debate about HIV/AIDS on Base FM Radio in Windhoek, Namibia.

Partnering with Lesotho in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS

On August 20, 2009, Lesao Lehohla, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and Robert B. Nolan, U.S. Ambassador to Lesotho, signed the "Partnership Framework to Support Implementation of the Lesotho National HIV and AIDS Response."

Under this Framework, the U.S. Government, through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the Government of Lesotho intend to collaboratively develop, plan and implement a five-year strategy that jointly contributes to the implementation of the Lesotho National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan, 2006-2011, in order to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Lesotho. This Partnership Framework is the fourth of its kind – after Malawi, Swaziland, and Angola – established between a U.S. Government PEPFAR program and a partner government.

New Public-Private Partnership to Improve Blood-Drawing Practices in Sub-Saharan Africa

On August 11, 2009, Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley, the U.S. Department of State Special Representative for Global Partnerships, and Gary M. Cohen, Executive Vice President of BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), signed a memorandum of understanding launching an initiative to help protect the health of healthcare personnel and patients in African countries.

Through this partnership, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) will work with BD, a leading global medical technology company, to improve blood collection safety in clinics and hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa.

The three-year initiative – which may be extended up to two additional years – is scheduled to begin in October in Kenya and expand to include up to four additional PEPFAR-supported countries. It will ultimately support in-service training for as many as 10,000 healthcare workers. When fully implemented, the monitoring component of the initiative aims to track as many as two million blood draws within each participating country.

The program will help hospital and clinical personnel improve their blood-drawing procedures and specimen handling, processes that are critical to the proper management of HIV/AIDS patients. The initiative will also work to control exposure to the virus among health workers by providing post-exposure prophylaxis. In addition, the program will help prevent needle stick injuries by establishing or enhancing needle stick injury surveillance. These monitoring measures can identify practices that pose risks to health workers and patients.

Reflecting PEPFAR's focus on empowering developing nations in the battle against HIV/AIDS, Ministries of Health in participating countries will take the lead in developing individualized policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures for blood drawing and specimen handling. As part of their collaboration, PEPFAR and BD will work on the ground with Ministries of Health, national reference laboratories and various implementing partners.

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HIV/AIDS services to the community.

Here, Secretary Clinton spoke to the clinic's patients and staff about America's commitment to working in partnership with host nations to combat HIV/AIDS.

"We have the challenge that everyone is aware of. We have to make up for some lost time, but we are looking forward. And I am very pleased that we have some people here who are willing to talk about their experience at the clinic, because the Minister and I can talk and our distinguished guests can talk, but what's important is what this clinic mean in the lives of the people in this area and what it represents for what can be done for people across South Africa," she said.

Ambassador Goosby, who was also present at this event, was honored to speak with staff and patients. He was especially moved by the stories of two people living with HIV/AIDS – a woman in her late 30s and a man in his late 40s.

"These two people spoke about receiving their diagnoses, the stigma they faced, and the toll HIV took on their health and outlook on life. But despite these hardships, they were also able to speak about coming to terms with their status, the restoration of health through treatment, and their renewed hopes for the future. Without this clinic, these two individuals, and many others, would have to travel a significant distance to receive life-saving treatment and care services, or would have had to forgo these services altogether," he said.

He also noted that seventy percent of the services provided at Cullinan clinic are funded by the Government of South Africa and the remaining 30 percent are supported by PEPFAR. He said that this partnership model is positive because, ultimately, each partner government is responsible for the health of its population. He stated that PEPFAR will work to support efforts like these that foster a country-owned and sustainable response.

Both Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Goosby look forward to continuing to support efforts throughout Africa to combat HIV/AIDS.

"The Obama administration has said that we want to not only target HIV/AIDS, but do it efficiently, and fulfill our commitment to the amount of money that was appropriated before and add to it. And that's what we intend to do," said Clinton.