



MARCH 2010 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

Ambassador Goosby visits Nigeria

Highlights Continued Partnership in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS



Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, visited Nigeria at the end of February to meet with senior government leaders, legislators, implementing partners and members of civil society.

While in Nigeria, Ambassador Goosby reinforced the U.S. Government commitment to Nigeria as a partner in the fight against HIV/AIDS and ensured that the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) would continue to work with Nigerian leadership to develop a sustainable, long-term response to the epidemic.

Ambassador Goosby's trip to Nigeria coincided with the visit of UNAIDS Executive Director, Michel Sidibé. Together, they visited Maitama Public Hospital, which is jointly supported by PEPFAR and UNAIDS. They also attended a roundtable discussion with implementing partners to discuss local ownership of the response to HIV/AIDS and partnerships for sustainability.

During a meeting with Nigerian Minister of Health Professor Babatunde Oshotimehin, Ambassador Goosby reiterated the U.S. Government's support for Nigeria's response to HIV/AIDS.

"It is gratifying to hear that Nigeria has developed a robust, orchestrated response at the primary, sec-



Photo by the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator
Ambassador Goosby speaks with members of the press during his February 2010 visit to Nigeria.

ondary, and tertiary levels. What we need to work on is the deficit in prevention of mother-to-child transmission services and shortfalls in counseling and testing. Despite the global economic meltdown, we remain firmly committed to Nigeria's response to HIV/AIDS," he said.

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U.S. Senators Visit St. Peter's Hospital in Ethiopia



In February, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) visited St. Peter's Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to observe the impact of U.S. Government-supported health

programs.

The visit to St. Peter's, Ethiopia's national tuberculosis referral hospital, occurred during their weeklong trip to Africa. During this trip, Senator Durbin and Senator Brown examined U.S. foreign assistance programs, particularly health projects, on the continent.

With the support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Tuberculosis Control Assistance Program, St. Peter's Hospital provides care for tuberculosis referral cases and patients with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis.

This hospital also provides a venue for individuals to receive care and treatment for HIV/AIDS as people living with HIV/AIDS are more likely to become infected with tuberculosis, and tuberculosis remains one of the leading causes of death for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Currently, St. Peter's provides antiretroviral



Photo by Ethiopia PEPFAR Team

Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) speak with Dr. Abdusemed, Deputy Director of St. Peter's Hospital in Ethiopia. The two men visited the hospital during their weeklong trip to Africa.

treatment to 250 patients. To increase its capacity to treat TB/HIV co-infected patients, the hospital, with U.S. Government support, is undergoing renovations to scale-up its HIV counseling and testing units and

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United States and Tanzania Enter into Partnership Framework to Fight HIV/AIDS

Earlier this month, Alfonso Lenhardt, U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, and Ramadhan Khijjah, Permanent Secretary for the Tanzanian Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, signed the "Five-Year Partnership Framework in Support of the Tanzanian National Response to HIV/AIDS 2009-2013."

This Partnership Framework outlines the future of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in Tanzania with the goal of reducing new HIV infections while maintaining ongoing activities aimed at improving the quality of treatment and care, and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals and households.

During the signing, Ambassador Lenhardt underscored the strong and growing relationship between Tanzania and the United States.

"We are confident that the deepened relationship between our two governments will sustain us as we move forward in implementing the Partnership Framework for Tanzania's families and communities...The Tanzania Partnership Framework is about working hand in hand to improve lives, support families and communities, and building strong health systems," said Ambassador Lenhardt.

In Cambodia, Midwives Demonstrate Benefits of HIV Testing for Pregnant Women



In Cambodia, local midwife Suth Sophal is teaching pregnant women about the benefits of being tested for HIV.

Sophal, a dynamic 45 year-old midwife working in a large maternity ward at Battambang Hospital, is responsible for the hospital's prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) program.

Sophal and her colleagues noticed that most pregnant women delivering at the hospital did not know their HIV status, which prevented midwives from offering effective HIV-prevention medications to mothers and babies. Realizing the dire consequences of this missed opportunity, Sophal and her team asked the Provincial Health Department to support HIV testing in the maternity ward.

Sophal was able to convince the maternity supervisor and midwifery team to participate in a demonstration project supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in partnership with the National Maternal and Child Health Center. This project was intended to illustrate that HIV testing around labor and delivery is not only feasible and acceptable to pregnant mothers, but also effective in increasing the number of women and babies given PMTCT interventions.

After just two months, the program began to show results. 73 percent of pregnant women entering the maternity ward did not know their HIV status, making them eligible for testing. Of these mothers-to-be, 98 percent were offered HIV counseling and testing, and 99 percent of them accepted. And, over time, more of the soon-to-be fathers also received HIV counseling and testing.

HIV testing is now commonplace in the maternity ward, allowing the team to identify HIV-positive pregnant women, provide antiretroviral prophylaxis during delivery, and enter the mother and child into the hospital system for appropriate follow-up care.

The results of this demonstration project have also influenced midwives at other maternity wards to start testing pregnant women for HIV.

Sophal keeps in touch with the women who test positive for HIV and connects them with local home-based care organizations. After her patients deliver, she also reminds them to bring their infants to the hospital for HIV testing and follow-up care. Sophal intends to share this experience countrywide.

"Testing during labor is a very important task that can ensure mothers and babies are free of AIDS," she said.

United States and Central America Region Enter into Partnership Framework to Fight HIV/AIDS



On March 3, the U.S. Government and the Council of Ministers of Health of Central America (COMISCA) meet in San José, Costa Rica to sign a Partnership Framework which outlines a jointly developed strategy to support the Central American regional response to HIV/AIDS.

The Partnership Framework provides a five-year strategic plan that will be implemented by the U.S. Government and the governments of the seven countries in the region: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

The Framework describes the coordination of key regional stakeholders to support the goals of the countries' Regional and National HIV/AIDS Programs, in addition to contributing to the goals of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

International Women's Day March 8, 2010

On March 8, the global community recognized International Women's Day – a day to reflect on the progress the world has made in advancing women's rights, and to recognize what work remains to be done.

In many part of the world, the AIDS epidemic has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. HIV/AIDS is the leading killer of women ages 15-44 worldwide. In Africa, nearly 60 percent of all people living with HIV/AIDS are women, with young women especially vulnerable to infection.

PEPFAR has worked and is continuing to address gender disparities associated with HIV/AIDS. The HIV-affected and infected women PEPFAR serves will further benefit from the Obama Administration's Global Health Initiative, which places women's health at the center of the initiative.

"The drivers of gender disparity in health are complex, but unless we address them, the epidemic will continue to disproportionately affect the health and lives of women worldwide. So, on this International Women's Day, I am proud that PEPFAR is part of our nation's intensive focus on advancing and protecting the rights and health of women and girls," said Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator.

To read Secretary Clinton's statement on International Women's Day, please visit: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/03/137841.htm>.

A statement by Ambassador Eric Goosby on International Women's Day is available at: <http://www.pepfar.gov/press/remarks/2010/137952.htm>.

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build a TB/HIV chronic care clinic, a drug dispensary and pharmacy store.

"My first visit to Africa was 12 years ago, and it was a sad time. They had discovered AIDS, but there was no cure. People believed it was a death sentence; so much has changed since then. Drugs are now available for many, and there is hope that HIV-positive people can now live a normal life," said Senator Durbin. "People are more open to testing and more open to facing this disease. That is a dramatic change. The United States, working through the PEPFAR program, provides funds

directly to many nations, as well as being a major contributor to the Global Fund. From my point of view, this has been money well spent."

Senator Brown expressed his satisfaction with St. Peter's Hospital and its staff.

"What the personnel is doing is a phenomenal work," said Senator Brown. "In this hospital, they cure people with TB and give them a chance in life they would never have had – especially for those who are taking antiretroviral drugs and treatment for HIV and TB."