news release

news release

NR/639/03/23/05

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2005

CONTACT: DEHAB GHEBREAB (Mrs.)
Public Affairs Officer
Phone: 227993/4

U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS MODERN METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION

The United States Government today provided 750,000 doses of **Depo Provera** worth US$ 804, 938 to the Ministry of Health/Central Board of Health for distribution to the public sector.

Depo Provera is an injectable contraceptive that lasts for three months. It is widely used throughout the world; in Zambia it has only been available in the public sector in selected pilot sites. However, it has now been approved for use throughout Zambia.

The United States Embassy is pleased to assist families by making available Depo Provera for distribution through the public sector. This option will help reduce the unmet need for family planning in Zambia, particularly among rural women. The availability of Depo Provera will mitigate the challenge of providing contraceptive methods that are readily available and easy to use.

Family planning using modern methods of contraceptives enables women and men to determine when and how many children to have. Family planning also plays a key role in improving the health of women and children, and contributes to better socio-economic conditions of families.

The Mission's U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports the Zambian Government to increase access to modern contraceptives. Some of the support includes:

- Technical assistance through the Health Systems and Services (HSSP) and Health Communications Partnership (HCP) projects for staff training and behavior change communications through media and community mobilization.
- Staff and commodities support to eight rural districts on the Copperbelt under the "Pilots to Regional Programs" project implemented by Population Council.
- Provision of family planning commodities, including Norplant (available at the University Teaching Hospital), SafePlan oral contraceptive pills, and Depo-Provera.

###