

SPEECH DELIVERED BY USAID/MOZAMBIQUE DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
DONNA STAUFFER ON THE OCCASION OF THE HOUSE DEDICATION IN HOKWE

13 JANUARY 2006

I'm happy to be with you here today, representing the U.S. Government, as we celebrate the dedication of twenty-one new houses made possible by the voluntary contributions of the community members of Hokwe, with support from the Foundation for Community Development and Habitat for Humanity. These organizations are some of the many partners supported by the American people that are using their expertise to assist the people of Mozambique, particularly those made vulnerable due to the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

These houses were built by generous hands for the sole purpose of benefiting children who have been affected by HIV/AIDS. The people of Hokwe should be very proud that you came together to identify a crisis within your community -- the increasing number of children who, as a result of HIV, have no place to call home -- and that you took action.

Shelter is fundamental for the growth and development of human beings. Security from outside elements and a sense of safety are essential to cultivating productive community members who can live healthy and prosperous lives. I hope that those of you living in these homes will give something back to your community, as well. For example, you can serve on committees that will help identify ways to assist other children whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS.

The United States President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief helped support the construction of these homes. The physical structures were built by some of you and your neighbors, with the help of Habitat for Humanity. I know how hard the work is -- building one of these houses. I helped build similar houses in other communities in Mozambique and in Botswana. It is back-breaking work. But seeing that so many children who would otherwise be without shelter will now have someplace to call home - I think we all can agree that it was worth the effort.

These houses will serve as an example of the positive steps taken by your community to protect children that are affected by HIV/AIDS and to fight the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS. But the houses also serve as a reminder that HIV/AIDS is very much present in this community, and that unless we all work together to stop the spread of AIDS, it will continue to strike our neighbors, our friends and our families. So I want to take this opportunity to urge you all to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS to stop the epidemic from affecting others. The most effective way to do this is through what is called the ABC approach: A is for abstinence until marriage, B for being faithful to one partner, and C for correctly and consistently using condoms.

You have demonstrated your concern for the future of your community by providing one of the most basic human needs to vulnerable children and the people who care for them. I applaud your hard work, your vision and especially your compassion.

Thank you.