

**Official handover of materials and equipment in support of the
Child Welfare Division, Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare**

**Remarks by USG Representative Gabriel Kalungi
Representing the U.S. Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**

Monday, October 22, 2007, 02:00 – 03:30pm

**Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
Trust Centre Building (2nd Floor Board Room), Independence Ave., Windhoek**

- Honourable Marlene Mungunda, Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW)
- Ms Sirkka Ausiku, PS MGECW
- Ms Helena Andjamba, Director – Child Welfare Division
- Colleagues from Pact Namibia and Sovereign Investments
- Members of the media
- Invited Guests

I take great pleasure in being here this afternoon to deliver materials and equipment in support of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, which is the lead Ministry responsible for coordinating support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Namibia under the National Plan of Action for OVC.

I'm here today on behalf of the United States Government President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), under which this support is provided. One of the US government's main responsibilities under the Emergency Plan is to support the national effort to scale-up care and support for Namibia's growing number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). PEPFAR has allocated over \$N 98 million for OVC care and support since 2004, with an additional \$N 60 million planned in 2008.

Today's handover of a system design and technical specifications along with the required computer hardware and software marks the kick off for the National OVC Database, an essential tool that will allow the Ministry to register and document support needs for Namibian OVC and also coordinate resources. This database will help the

Government of Namibia, development partners, and Namibian civil society plan and respond more effectively to the needs of vulnerable children.

I think we're all aware of the worst case orphan scenario for Namibia -- by the year 2021 there will be an estimated 250,000 orphans in Namibia – that's 1 in 3 children. This scenario would be tragic and is unacceptable. It is indeed encouraging to note the growing coalition of Namibians and friends of Namibia who are actively fighting against HIV and AIDS, working to avert the nightmare of having twice as many children in need of care and support in 14 years.

The handover today is one key component of this support. The US government has provided long- and short-term technical assistance to the Ministry, and meets regularly at USG Partners meetings and the OVC Permanent Task Force to strategize, coordinate, and share lessons-learned with partners supporting OVC. In addition, the US government, through Pact, is providing resources to specifically assist the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare to fill critical resource needs to enhance its ability to act and respond to the National Plan of Action for OVC.

We have enjoyed strong ties and close cooperation with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare over the last four years. We encourage you to continue with the enormously important work of serving Namibia's vulnerable children, and we are pleased to be able to support you. As one of Namibia's main external sources of funding for OVC care, USAID looks forward to an even closer relationship with the Ministry assisting it to achieve its mandate.

In conclusion, I'd like to offer a special word of thanks to our partners: Pact Namibia, Sovereign Investments (the company that set up the database), the Ministry's Permanent Task Force for OVC, the Technical Sub-Committee that developed and designed the specifications for the database, and the numerous implementing and development partners that contributed to stakeholder consultations and planning meetings. We commend the Ministry for this excellent work to support Namibia's children, and will

continue to work with partners to ensure that the database is used to strategically coordinate resources delivered to OVC.

We are proud to be your partner and we rely on and respect the expertise you have developed regarding OVC care and support. I wish the Ministry and all of you strength and wisdom in your good work to continue to protect, care, and support Namibia's children who are in need. Thank you.