

## PEPFAR MEETING (COP 2017)

DATE: 21 February 2017

Hotel Destiny, Ongwediva

Dear esteemed colleagues from the US Government (PEPFAR, CDC, USAID and PEACE CORPS)

Colleagues from MOHSS (representing Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Oshana & Omusati, *Kavango East & West and Zambezi*),  
Representative, from various civil society organizations (if there are any)

A very good morning to you all,

My name is:

Let me seize this opportune time to welcome you to Oshana region, and to this beautiful town of Ongwediva in particular.

Thank you to the organizers (~~of this meeting~~) for choosing our region to host this important meeting.

Colleagues, you are most welcome and feel comfortable!

I am honored to be standing here before you to open this meeting which represents concerted efforts to strengthen our partnership and being critical contributors to the fight against HIV/AIDS and to control the epidemic in Namibia.

In the last ten years or so, PEPFAR program has shifted from a response focused on the delivery of emergency services to a targeted program, focused on evidence-based interventions, sustainability and shared responsibility.

From our side as a government also, we have come to learn and understand over the last few years that to achieve a comprehensive continuum of response where quality services are accessible and meet the needs of patients, we must all share the responsibilities; from the highest forms of government to civil society organizations, working in community level across the country. The responsibility falls not to one, but to all of us.

We all must jointly plan and develop a sustainable health program that is locally-owned and responsive to the needs of those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. We should create an environment where the level of collaboration between the Namibian government (through MOHSS), donor community and civil society organizations are strengthened all the time.

We have come together today as technical experts to share activities and priorities, and gain input from all of us. With our continued engagement with our partners, we can move forward through the COP planning and implementation process to achieve epidemic control in Namibia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Where there is room for improvement, we should make it heard and known. If there are programs and interventions that have been successful, let us strategize together on how we can continue capitalizing on their successes. Where there are gaps, let us collectively determine how best we can address them.

I have visited various health facilities and communities within our region and beyond. I have witnessed the tireless efforts of community health mobilizers delivering preventive messages, providing community-based interventions including CBHTC; and working with health facility staff to support care and treatment efforts.

I have listened to our local leaders in our communities expressing their interest and desire to actively engage more with health programs, and calling for more assistance and help.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A lot have been done and achieved, but a lot more needs to be done and achieved again. So, there is still a need to refocus on accelerating the intensification and diagnosing of HIV+ people through intensified and expanded HTC, initiating these individuals into treatment; and strengthening the care and treatment continuum among priorities and key populations.

I am humbled by your efforts and what we have accomplished together to date. I also recognize that there is still a long road ahead to achieve our goals. Without you our donors, we believe an AIDS Free Namibia will not be achieved, nor sustained.

Your efforts help to support access, scale-up, quality services, and the overall success of the health systems programs we will be discussing today. You have created and enabled the success of the program through your endless support.

Thank you for your readiness to participate, your leadership and continued commitments to an AIDS Free Namibia.

With these words, colleagues, I declare this meeting officially opened...

I thank you !

Johanna Angaleni Haimene

Regional Health Director

Oshana Region