



October 2007 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

## Peace Corps Volunteers Return to Ethiopia U.S. and Ethiopia Sign Peace Corps Country Agreement



After nearly a decade's absence, the United States Peace Corps has returned to Ethiopia. On October 2, 2007, United States Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto and Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tekeda Alemu signed a Peace Corps Country Agreement. The agreement reestablishes the United States Peace Corps presence in Ethiopia. "The return of Peace Corps to Ethiopia is an important part of the United States' commitment to building a more prosperous Ethiopia," said Ambassador Yamamoto.

With support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR), 43 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Ethiopia on October 7, 2007 to work with the people of Ethiopia in their fight against HIV/AIDS. The volunteers will spend two-year assignments working under the Ministry of Health/HAPCO in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, including work with orphans and vulnerable children.

Ethiopia is strategically important to the United States and to the region in promoting peace and security, advancing economic development, and creating a better and more prosperous future for the people of the region. Peace Corps Volunteers work with people who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

The U.S. Peace Corps was first established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, when he challenged young people to serve their country in promoting world peace and friendship by living and working in other countries. Between 1961 and 2007, more than 187,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have been invited to serve in 139 countries.

Ethiopia was one of the first countries to invite the Peace Corps to establish its program of peace and friendship. In September 1962, 279 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Ethiopia to serve

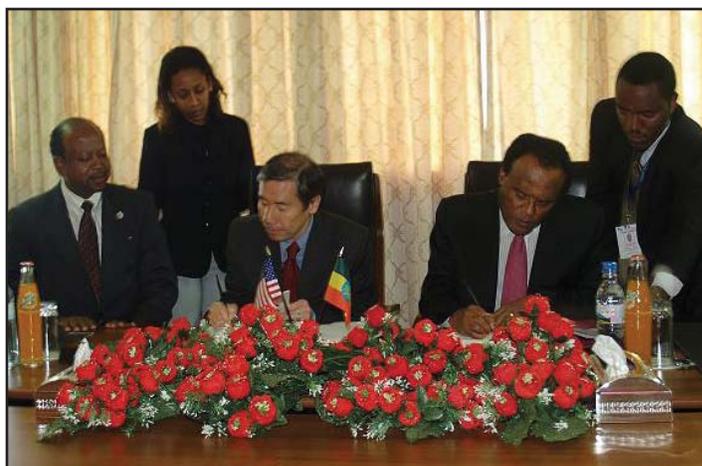


Photo by Ethiopia PEPFAR Team  
United States Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto and Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tekeda Alemu sign a Peace Corps Country Agreement.

as secondary school teachers. From 1962 to 1977 and then again between 1995 and 1999 when the program closed due to conflict in the region, Peace Corps/Ethiopia was one of the largest Peace Corps programs in the world, with Volunteers working in education, health, small business, rural development, law, and agriculture. During this period, more than 3,500 Volunteers served in rural communities all over Ethiopia. In January 2007, Peace Corps was pleased to accept the Government of Ethiopia's request to resume activities.

Country Director for Peace Corps/Ethiopia Peter Parr said at today's signing ceremony, "It is a great honor for me to come home to Ethiopia where I lived for many years as a young person, and for me and the Peace Corps/Ethiopia family to be able to share in the realities of building more extensive relations between the people of Ethiopia and the people of the United States."

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Mark Your Calendar

**WORLD  
AIDS DAY**

*December 1, 2007*

## Living Positive HIV/AIDS Prevention Tour Comes to Windhoek



Between October 8 and October 12, 2007, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) sponsored Phase II of the HIV/AIDS Living Positive Tour in Windhoek, Namibia.

The Tour's purpose was to bring prevention, anti-stigma and positive living messages from Namibian role models to Namibia's youth.

"The Living Positive Tour is an innovative mix of music, drama, prevention and anti-stigma messages, and real stories of Namibians who are living with HIV/AIDS. We are working with Namibian artists and speakers to reach Namibia's youth with crucial HIV/AIDS prevention messages so that we may halt the cycle of infection," said Ray Castillo, Director of the American Cultural Center.

The tour was led by Vocal Motion 6 (VM6), a group

of young Namibian artists who are committed to fighting HIV/AIDS in Namibia and use their music to inspire and inform young audiences. They were joined by Ms. Herlyn Uiras, a Youth Counselor from the Walvis Bay Multi-Purpose center who is HIV-positive and who shared her powerful story about the importance of positive choices. VM6 performed their uplifting and inspiring a capella songs to complement this message. The members of VM6 are role models for boys and girls alike, inspiring them with their drive and commitment.

In July 2007, the first phase of the Tour reached 5,000 Namibian youth in the northern regions. Given the Tour's initial success, PEPFAR Namibia decided to expand it and bring this innovative HIV/AIDS prevention program to Windhoek's youth. The Windhoek tour will be followed with a tour to the Namibian Coast in December and one to the South in February 2008.

## Botswana President Festus Mogae Visits the United States

During a visit to the United States in September 2007, Botswana President Festus Mogae advocated for a closer relationship between Africa and the United States.

President Mogae participated in a Roundtable on Democracy on Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2007, at the United Nations in New York. In Washington, D.C., Mogae delivered remarks at the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

His remarks at CCA, entitled "The importance of the USA becoming more engaged in Africa, and especially Botswana," stressed the political and economic transformations taking place throughout the continent of Africa.

During his remarks at CSIS, President Mogae stated, "The modest successes we have recorded in my country...and indeed in many African countries, could not have been achieved without United States support under PEPFAR...PEPFAR has turned despair into hope. PEPFAR has galvanized donor countries and agencies alike to act in concert in the interest of humanity." These remarks, entitled "Botswana's Future: Reflection on HIV/AIDS, Democratization, and U.S.-Botswana Relations," are available online at: <http://www.pepfar.gov/press/92826.htm>.



White House photo by Eric Draper

President George W. Bush pauses with fellow heads of state following a Roundtable on Democracy Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2007, at the United Nations in New York. From left are: President Festus Gontebanye Mogae of the Republic of Botswana; President Bush; President Leonel Fernandez of the Dominican Republic; Secretary of State for Foreign Relations Carlos Morales Troncoso of the Dominican Republic, and President Jakaya Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania.

## Renovated Reference Laboratory Opens in Botswana



With support from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) the newly renovated Nyangabgwe Hospital HIV Reference Laboratory was officially handed over to the Botswana Government on Sept. 7, 2007.

The state-of-the-art Nyangabgwe Hospital HIV Reference Laboratory is now the second largest reference laboratory in the country. More than \$935,000 went into renovating and equipping the laboratory located at the site of the former Jubilee Hospital.

The new lab will allow Botswana to double the number of people monitored for HIV/AIDS treatment and care by alleviating pressure on the Gaborone reference laboratory. The laboratory, which will serve northern Botswana, will provide viral load and CD4 testing and support all laboratory services related to the Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) program, which was rolled out last year as part of the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) program.

In addition to the renovations and purchase of new equipment, PEPFAR is also supporting training for lab employees' use of equipment, the hiring of one new lab technician, as well as maintenance costs. These initiatives have already improved the capacity of the laboratory to conduct hematology, chemistry and serology testing for the follow-up of patients on ARVs. Technical support is also being provided by staff at BOTUSA (the Botswana/CDC Partnership) to help equip and run the laboratory.

During a ceremony held in Francistown, Mr. Philip

Drouin, Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Gaborone, gave remarks and performed the official handover of the HIV Reference Laboratory to the Honorable Minister of Health Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou and the Ministry of Health.

Also present at the ceremony were senior officials from the Ministry of Health, National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA) Coordinator Mr. Christopher Molomo, Francistown District Commissioner Mrs. Sylvia Muzila, His Worship the Mayor of Francistown Mr. Buti Billy, Nyangabgwe Hospital Superintendent Dr. Japhter Masunge and Laboratory Director Dr. Nathan Gokhale.

## PEPFAR Issue Brief Series Complete



With the release of the Prevention with Positives Issue Brief, the entire series is now complete.

Each issue brief provides an overview of the intervention area, examples of PEPFAR-supported work, information about results, and lists of key resources on the topic.

To access the briefs or for a full list of topics, please visit <http://www.pepfar.gov/press/c19614.htm>.



Photo by Botswana PEPFAR Team

At the front entrance, visitors walk inside to tour the new facilities.