

Remarks by Ambassador Michelle D. Gavin  
Dedication of Safe Male Circumcision Facility  
at Nkoyaphiri Clinic, Mogoditshane, Gaborone  
September 18, 2012

*As prepared for delivery*

- It is an honor to be here today to participate in the official opening of the Safe Male Circumcision facility at the Nkoyaphiri Clinic.
- This occasion demonstrates clearly the strong partnership between our two governments, working together to improve the health of the nation.
- I am here today to recognize an exciting landmark in the national Safe Male Circumcision Program. Today, the people of the United States of America donate a new, innovative Safe Male Circumcision clinic to the people of Botswana.
- This facility is not just *any* facility. The clinic structure was custom-designed by staff of our two governments working collaboratively, specifically for the Botswana SMC program.
- It is the first of its kind in all of Botswana and one of the first in the region! The building alone is valued at 500,000 pula and features dedicated space for all aspects of the Botswana SMC program—group education, individual and couples HIV testing and counseling, medical examination, surgery, and follow-up care. It is truly remarkable how much work can be done in such a small space!
- You have probably heard of the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child.” As we also know, it takes a village to implement an SMC program!
- This clinic could not function without a range of Botswana ministries and institutions working in close partnership with U.S. counterpart agencies supported by funds from the American people.
- The United States sponsors four implementing partners to provide services here at the Nkoyaphiri SMC Clinic:
  - Jhpiego, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University, trains and sponsors medical and coordination staff at the facility who provide SMC medical services;
  - Tebelopele provides SMC education services, as well as HIV testing and counseling for prospective clients and their partners;
  - PSI provides extensive marketing and community mobilization services to maximize program uptake; and finally,
  - Supply Chain Management Systems provides equipment and logistical support to keep services running optimally.
- I would particularly like to note that the Botswana Defence Force and U.S. Department of Defense and have been incredibly helpful with the donation and maintenance of the surgical tent structure that housed SMC services here at Nkoyaphiri clinic prior to the new facility’s construction.
- Peace Corps volunteers work hand-in-hand with PSI and other community organizations to mobilize men to learn more about SMC and consider it for themselves.

- It is a quite an extraordinary effort involving many different players. Please join me in thanking these diverse governmental and non-governmental organizations, who have worked so diligently to make this clinic a reality.
- Kgosi Dihutso and residents of Gaborone and Kweneng East district, I would like to recognize perhaps the most important ingredient needed in producing a successful SMC program – the actual *village* itself.
- Here in the Mogoditshane community, there are mobilizers actively talking to residents about SMC, discussing their concerns and questions, and providing accurate, reliable, and trustworthy information.
- Kgosi, with your support, the program is growing. More and more men are talking about circumcision, and learning the benefits of the procedure. Your support of the program is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your commitment to spreading the word about SMC and for your efforts to promote the services of the clinic.
- To the men who've had services at the clinic and are willing to publicly testify about your experience, thank you for sharing your story for the greater good.
- To the women that support these men, the wives, girlfriends, and mothers of SMC clients—I'd like to thank you most of all. Please continue to encourage your loved ones through the procedure, and spread the word about how women's health also benefits greatly when men are circumcised. Indeed, the entire nation gains from these individual efforts.
- Honored guests, please join me in a special round of applause to recognize the dedication of the local community, clients and families who support this clinic.
- You may ask yourself—why is the U.S. Government here, and why are we so committed to the Botswana Safe Male Circumcision Program?
- I can tell you the answer in two simple words: “It works.” This clinic is a tangible manifestation of the American financial and technical assistance to implement evidence-based HIV prevention interventions in Botswana, such as safe male circumcision.
- Safe Male Circumcision is a priority program for our two nations because of the compelling evidence that SMC reduces a man's risk of HIV infection by over 60%. Think about it. If we had a vaccine that effective, we would collectively insist that it be made available to all.
- Botswana was one of the first countries to step forward and develop a National Strategic Plan with the goal of circumcising 385,000 adult men by 2016.
- To contribute to this goal, the United States is pleased to support safe male circumcision with technical expertise, equipment, and infrastructure to promote and scale up the program.
- In addition to the SMC services provided here at Nkoyaphiri Clinic, the U.S. Government funds five other SMC clinics throughout Botswana. These dedicated clinics are centers of excellence, and ensure that men who visit receive services with care, safety, and compassion.
- The U.S. Government will continue to be a proud contributor to the national HIV prevention strategy in Botswana by supporting evidenced based programs like SMC, along with prevention of mother to child transmission, HIV Testing and Counseling, and HIV care and treatment.

- I am particularly proud that the United States Government is committed to supporting Botswana in its efforts to reach the goal of zero new HIV infections by 2016.
- In closing, let me underscore the full commitment of my government to yours. On behalf of the American people, we proudly present this clinic to you today, and we remain honored to work alongside our partners in Botswana toward this one goal – the end of HIV in Botswana, and the end of the terrible strain it has placed on your budget, your health systems, and most importantly, your families and communities.
- Pula!!