

Remarks
Ambassador D. Brent Hardt
Guyana's Ministry of Health's Materials Management Unit –
Diamond Facility
Grand Opening
Friday, March 8th, 2013, 10:00 am
at the Diamond Facility

Honorable Minister of Health Dr. Bheri Ramsaran,
Government Officials,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Good afternoon, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for the invitation to participate in the opening of the Ministry of Health's new state-of-the-art warehouse for the Materials Management Unit. Today marks the culmination of over five years of planning, coordination, hard work and perseverance. We are very pleased to see the completion of this vital stepping stone on the road to ensuring that Guyana's pharmaceutical management operations are world class.

This impressive new warehouse is a product of the decade-long partnership that the United States and Guyana have forged under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and stands as a

physical 'bricks and mortar' achievement that serves to remind us not only of what we have accomplished together, but also of what remains to be done.

For the real legacy of PEFAR is not in the structure of a building, but in the lives saved and in the lifesaving capacity that has been developed through PEPFAR. It is for this purpose that we are dedicating this building today. From the outset, the U.S. Embassy has supported this project through USAID and the Center for Disease Control, but as you may know PEPFAR is an interagency effort that also includes the Department of State, the Peace Corps and the Department of Defense.

I wish to thank the Management Sciences for Health (MSH) project staff and its partner, Supply Chain Management Systems (SCMS), for their professional coordination efforts and their sound technical assistance, which together have made such a significant contribution to Guyana's national HIV/AIDS response. Several other renowned international organizations contributed their time and resources to this project, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank, and the Inter-American

Development Bank. Working in harmony, and alongside Guyana's Ministry of Health, these donors proved that the most significant advances are made through cooperation and coordination. By working together, we have all reinforced our commitment to the global AIDS response.

Last November, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton released the *PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS-free Generation*. The blueprint provides a roadmap both for how PEPFAR will work to achieve an AIDS-free generation and what needs to be done to help bring countries to -- and beyond -- the tipping point in their epidemics. This blueprint sends an unequivocal message that the U.S. commitment to the global AIDS response remains strong, comprehensive, and driven by science.

The blueprint further details what PEPFAR agencies and partner countries are doing and will do to help achieve an AIDS-free generation. In calling upon the world to share responsibility to reach this goal, the blueprint provides five goals with specific action and implementation steps that the U.S. will take with partner countries:

First, the United States is committed to Scaling-up Combination Prevention and Treatment. As former Secretary Clinton said last year, if we scale up prevention of mother-to-child-transmission; treatment as prevention; voluntary medical male circumcision in areas where that is effective; and access to HIV testing and counseling, condoms and other evidence-based prevention interventions, we can put countries—and the world—on a path to achieving an AIDS-free generation.

Second, we will be smart about our investments – going where the virus is, and targeting evidence-based interventions for populations at greatest risk. Understanding how the virus moves through a population is directly informed by understanding where new infections are occurring.

The project we are dedicating here today embodies the goal of making smarter investments and supporting interventions that optimize the targeting of the illness. This new warehouse will significantly improve Guyana’s storage and distribution capacity for HIV-related and essential drugs by housing all medicines under one roof and in the best conditions. This will streamline the supply chain for these commodities

and ensure that Guyana's population has regular access to products of the highest quality.

Third, we will promote sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness. We will continue to ensure that we are getting the most out of every PEPFAR dollar spent in terms of saving even more lives. This new facility is an important step towards achieving efficiency and effectiveness, but sustaining it will require the Ministry of Health to continue to exert its leadership, to absorb technical assistance provided, and to maintain the effectiveness of the building blocks in combating HIV/AIDS that have already been set in place. Just as a sturdy ship can crash into a bed of rocks if not sailed skillfully by an experienced captain, so, too, this facility needs skillful handling to navigate through its challenges so it can yield optimal results.

Fourth, we believe that creating an AIDS-free generation requires a global effort. No one country or entity can do it alone – but, together, we can achieve our shared goal.

Last, but certainly not least, science must continue to guide all of our efforts. It is science that has brought us to this historic point and it is

science that will guide us home. That is why we are using the most recent scientific advances to implement more effective programs to provide HIV prevention, treatment, and care to millions of people worldwide, and in communities throughout Guyana.

I thank you, Mr. Minister, for taking the initiative and making such a significant contribution to Guyana's national HIV/AIDS response. I am confident that you and your team will continue to lead this process, and I am eager to see this facility up and running in the fight against AIDS in Guyana. I also look forward to hearing from its beneficiaries, including those not in our audience today, and to seeing how much it is contributing to improving their quality of life.

The United States is committed to continuing to work with Guyana and its partners as we move toward a sustainable, long-term response that brings Guyana to zero new HIV infections and gives renewed hope to the possibility of an AIDS-free generation. Congratulations once again, and thank you very much for this great life-saving partnership!