



# Namibian Defence Force

## JOURNAL



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April - June 2016



# NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE

## 26<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



# Successful

## PARTNERSHIP in fighting HIV and AIDS

By: M Tomas

**“There was a need to initiate comprehensive and innovative prevention mechanisms specifically on treatment, care and support. MAPP reached and made differences to soldiers, officers and commanders who have tremendous influence on the population.”**



Defence would continue to undertake comprehensive campaigns for behavioural change and treatment literacy.

The MAPP partnership was initiated after a far-reaching study and consultations, which concluded that the pandemic would pose a negative impact on the capability of the Force if strategic interventions were not made.

Mr. Shivute said that, prior to MAPP, statistics indicated the escalating cases of HIV and AIDS in the general public including the military community in the SADC Region. “There was a need to initiate comprehensive and innovative prevention mechanisms specifically on treatment, care and support. MAPP reached and made differences to soldiers, officers and commanders who have tremendous influence on the population,” the PS acknowledged.

The PS further said, various initiatives such as the production of Remember Eliphaz Films, the conduct of mass media campaigns, the acquisition of two (2) Mobile Van vehicles and four 4x4 vehicles for outreach programmes, and the theatres at both Peter Mweshihange Military Health Center (PMMHC) and Grootfontein Military Hospital were utilised to roll out the program successfully.

The US-DoD has been a source of finance to the project while ITECH served as an implementing instrument; coordinating routine on site mentoring,

**T**he Ministry of Defence (MOD) partnership with the United State of America's Department of Defence (US-DoD) and the International Training Education Center of Health (ITECH) in the fight against HIV and AIDS through the Military Action and Prevention Program (MAPP) in the NDF was concluded on 26 April 2016 at the Defence Headquarters.

In his closing remarks read by Brig Gen Sophia Ndeitunga, Chief of Staff Defence Health Services (DHS), Mr. Petrus Shivute, the Permanent Secretary (PS) of Defence said, since its inception in 2006, the MAPP has significantly reduced the impact of HIV and AIDS in the Force. The PS stated that, the Ministry of



**Brig Gen Sophia Ndeitunga, Chief of Staff-Defence Health Services (right) and Col Tom Fuhrmann US Defence Attaché to Namibia sign a Memorandum of Understanding that ends MOD, US-DoD and I-TECH partnership on MAPP. Col Muvangua the MOD Program Coordinator and Mr. Mark Shepherd, I-TECH Interim Acting Country Director look on**

providing technical support and ensuring that the capacity of MOD Health Care Workers is developed.

At the same event Col Tom Fuhrmann, the US Defence Attaché to Namibia thus said that the financial support the DoD put into the program was successfully invested. He said that this was in line with the USA's President Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) that provides financial assistance to address the global HIV and AIDS epidemic and help to save lives of those suffering from the disease, primarily in Africa.

"The fund allows the DoD through I-TECH to work with the MOD in combating HIV and AIDS within the NDF," said Col Fuhrmann.

The US Defence Attaché further said that the US-DoD would remain committed to combating HIV and AIDS and other diseases in Namibia. "I fully expect the future programs to build upon the success of our military cooperation in HIV/AIDS-related infrastructure development, policy formulation and specialized training," Col Fuhrmann reiterated.

I-TECH, a center in the University of Washington, is a global network that works with local partners to develop skilled health care workers and strong national health systems in resource-limited countries. It also promotes local ownership to sustain effective health systems.

Speaking on behalf of I-TECH, Ms. Maggy Nghatanga said that I-TECH was encouraged to put more effort in MAPP by the sound partnership in which they provided technical support and ensured capacity development of MOD Health Care Workers. She also cited the program's key areas which were fully coordinated by ITECH such as technical support on HIV Testing and Counselling, Adult Treatment, Adult Care Support, training of staff on TB/HIV (HVTB), training for laboratory technologists, and provisions of material in support of the Voluntary Male Circumcision amongst others.

In addition, Ms. Nghatanga finally pledged with the MOD to continue building the capacity of the Health Care Workers in order to strengthen the quality of HIV and AIDS services and contribute to the control of the epidemic.



**Ms. Maggy Nghatanga, the ITECH-MAPP Program Leader speaking at the closing ceremony of the partnership**

**These Outreach HIV Counselling Vans are part of the material US-DOD donated to the MOD as additional effort to fight HIV/AIDS in the force**

