

*Remarks by Todd C. Chapman
Chargé d'Affaires
Handover of bed nets to Mozambican military
Wednesday, April 29th*

His Excellency, Minister of Defense Nyussi,

Representative of Population Services International (PSI) Mr. Arild Drivdal,

Members of the Armed Forces,

Members of the media;

Good morning.

It is my pleasure today to participate in this event with Minister Nyussi to commemorate yet an additional way in which the United States Government is partnering with the Armed Forces of Mozambique. We are here with you in the recognition that malaria is the leading cause of death in Mozambique. This dreaded disease, though totally preventable and treatable, continues to take more lives of Mozambicans than any other disease in this country. Therefore, I am pleased to provide the FADM with 20,000 long-lasting treated bed nets for use by your military personnel throughout Mozambique. An armed forces crippled by malaria clearly can not carry out its mission.

The armed forces of a democratic nation are established to preserve and defend the security, national interests, and democratic integrity of that nation in the ways determined by its constitution. I commend the FADM for fulfilling its democratic duty, as I anticipate it will continue to do so during this election year. We unfortunately only have to look to regional neighbors to see examples where African militaries did not serve this purpose, but rather inserted themselves into the political process to overthrow or preserve specific political regimes outside constitutional norms. Such actions are regrettable, destabilizing, and destructive. And, as is so often the case, it is ultimately the poor in Africa who pay the price for such ill-advised actions.

On Friday, people around the globe will commemorate World Malaria Day, and we look forward to participating with the Mozambican government and PSI in activities to draw awareness to this deadly disease. Today's donation of about \$200,000 will provide the opportunity for each Mozambican member of the Armed Forces to receive a good-quality, long-lasting treated bed net under which to sleep at night and protect themselves, and their families, from the lethal

disease. I would like to thank PSI for their assistance in making this donation possible.

Our government launched the President's Malaria Initiative in Mozambique in 2006 with the objective of reducing the cases of malaria in half. We have dedicated \$35 million to achieving this goal in Mozambique with encouraging results – thousands of health workers trained specifically in malaria prevention; over 1 million treated bednets distributed to the most vulnerable; and by the end of this year, about 5 million doses of life-saving drugs distributed to those affected with the disease. The funding for today's donation, however, actually comes through PEPFAR, our initiative to combat HIV/AIDS, as high rates of malaria put those with HIV at greater risk.

So we stand with Mozambique today in support of the fight against malaria and against HIV/AIDS. We stand here today to pay special recognition to the armed forces, because we recognize the importance of a healthy armed force for the protection of a nation and its people. The U.S. Government stands with the Government of Mozambique in our commitment to further equipping, training, and protecting the health of, the Armed Forces of Mozambique so that it can accomplish its important mission.

Thank you.