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April 6, 2020

MEMO FOR REBECCA GONZALES, U.S. AMBASSADOR TO LESOTHO

SUBJECT: PEPFAR Lesotho Country Operational Plan 2020 Approval

This memo represents the successful completion of the PEPFAR Lesotho Country Operational Plan (COP) 2020 planning, development, and submission process. PEPFAR Lesotho, together with the partner government, civil society, and multilateral partners, has planned and submitted a COP 2020 in alignment with the directives from the COP 2020 planning letter, data-driven decisions made during the in-country retreat, and agreements made during the planning meeting.

This memo serves as the approval memo for the PEPFAR Lesotho Country Operational Plan (COP) 2020 with a total approved budget of \$82,110,265, including all initiatives and applied pipeline, to achieve the targets and outcomes as listed in this memo and all of its appendices. Total budget is reflective of the following programming:

1. Funding Table

Lesotho	New Funding (all accounts)	Pipeline	Total Budget FY 2021 Implementation
Total Budget	79,069,953	3,040,312	82,110,265
Bilateral	79,069,953	2,292,547	81,362,500
Central		747,765	747,765

S/GAC approves a total FY 2021 outlay for COP 2020 implementation that does not exceed the total approved COP 2020 budget of \$82,110,265. Any prior year funds that are not included within this COP 2020 budget and documented within this memo, its appendices, and official PEPFAR data systems are not to be made available for execution and outlay during FY 2021 without additional written approval. The new FY 2020 funding and prior year funds approved within this memo as a part of the total COP 2020 budget are allocated to achieve specific results, outcomes, and impacts as approved. All requested Operational Plan Updates and shifting of funds – either between mechanisms and partners, or to add additional funding to mechanisms and partners for execution in FY 2021– must be submitted to and approved by S/GAC.

S/GAC approves additional central funding of up to \$360,485 for PEPFAR Lesotho to procure condoms and lubricants.

Approved funding will be made available to agencies for allocation to country platform to implement COP 2020 programming and priorities as outlined below and in the appendix.

Background

This approval is based upon: the discussions that occurred among the country team, agency headquarters, S/GAC, indigenous and international stakeholders, and implementing partners during the February 24-28, 2020 in-person planning meetings; discussions among participants during virtual approval meetings; and the final COP 2020 submission, including all data submitted via official PEPFAR systems or within supplemental documents.

Program Summary

Funding and targets for PEPFAR Lesotho's Country Operational Plan 2020 will support PEPFAR Lesotho's vision to reach and sustain epidemic control. This can be achieved through partnership with the Government of Lesotho and various stakeholders, including most importantly the Basotho people, through the efficient identification of people living with HIV (PLHIV) who were previously unaware of their status, linking and retaining them on treatment, and building on historical achievements to continue to reduce HIV incidence and enabling PLHIV to live healthy, productive lives. Entering COP 2020, Lesotho remained on the cusp of epidemic control with an overall community viral suppression rate of approximately 75%, but gaps in key areas remained. During COP 2020, PEPFAR Lesotho will work to address those gaps, and reach and maintain the achievement of the 95-95-95 goals (i.e., that 95% of PLHIV be aware of their positive status, that 95% of those who are aware of their status receive antiretroviral therapy (ART), and that 95% of those who receive ART maintain suppression of their HIV) across all age and sex groups. This translates to an overall programmatic goal of maintaining 313,028 PLHIV on life-saving treatment by the end of COP 2020 and ensuring that at least 292,909 of them have suppressed viral loads.

The PEPFAR Lesotho programmatic strategy to be implemented in FY 2021 will focus on finding the remaining PLHIV who are unaware of their status and ensuring that those who are on ART stay retained in care to maximize the health benefits of ART and the prevention aspect of treatment. PEPFAR Lesotho will also optimize complementary prevention efforts in order to further reduce incidence through programs such as its DREAMS (Determined Resilient Empowered AIDS-free Mentored and Safe) partnership for adolescent girls and young women, its VMMC (Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision) effort, and its programs to serve key populations.

To optimize the success of these programs during FY 2021, PEPFAR Lesotho will ensure that essential policies are fully implemented, and will continue or initiate several key strategies, such as (1) Refining its index testing practices to deploy them with fidelity and at the appropriate scale; (2) Improving retention levels through more active partner management, increasing numbers of adherence counselors (particularly for young people who tend to have lower levels of consistent adherence to prescribed regimens), and capitalizing on rapidly expanding electronic medical records systems, a national electronic registry with unique patient identifiers, and recency testing; (3) Enhancing site-level monitoring, in part by introducing a novel community-led approach; (4) Improving pediatric treatment and continuing to provide support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC); (5) Expanding the DREAMS program to reduce HIV risk for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW); (6) Working towards higher levels of VMMC for men ages 15 and older; (7) Completing the transition towards the optimal Dolutegravir-based antiretroviral drug regimen for all PLHIV and expanding multi-month dispensing (MMD) practices to a minimum of 3-6 months for all; (8) Sustaining Lesotho's exceptionally high viral load suppression rates (in most disaggregated measures of data across age, sex, and geography, this already is at 95% or

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above) and finishing the expansion of lab capacity to provide annual viral load tests for 100% of all eligible PLHIV; (9) Continuing to expand Tuberculosis Preventive Therapy (TPT); and (10) Further enhancing collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH) across all levels – national, district, and site, as well as with other stakeholders. PEPFAR funds for Lesotho will focus heavily on the continuation and implementation of these various strategies.

During COP 2020, PEPFAR Lesotho will continue to invest to reach all Basotho living with HIV in an increasingly client-centered way. Observations for Lesotho's second PHIA (Population-based HIV Impact Assessment) were completed in March 2020, and its published results will help to inform both the estimates of PEPFAR Lesotho's achievements to date and where efforts should be supplemented or redirected during COP 2020 to quickly fill any remaining programmatic gaps. In anticipation of the PHIA results and the likely validation that Lesotho has already achieved a high rate of community viral suppression, PEPFAR Lesotho plans to evolve its program towards a maintenance mode where increasing levels of responsibility are gradually transferred to the host government and local partners while remaining treatment gaps are filled. Although a number of PEPFAR Lesotho's programmatic features will look similar from COP 2019 to COP 2020, there will be a strong emphasis on increasing the efficiency of efforts, particularly with case-finding and repurposing certain healthcare cadres to retention and case management functions. PEPFAR Lesotho will increasingly work with and implement activities through indigenous partners to build local capacity and increase programmatic sustainability. During COP 2020, PEPFAR Lesotho's highly successful men's clinic model will continue to be fully supported with the aim to scale it up to at least 50 sites in COP 2020. All case-finding efforts will incorporate approaches such as risk-screening, informed testing, and HIV self-testing to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of case-finding. Lesotho will expand the DREAMS program to two more of Lesotho's high burden lowlands districts in COP 2020 and will scale up PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) programs. The VMMC program will focus on only males 15 years of age or older. PEPFAR Lesotho continues a strong partnership with the Global Fund and several key collaborative arrangements were struck during COP 2020 planning meetings, including the Global Fund's complementary DREAMS-like efforts to be implemented in Lesotho's one remaining lowlands district not covered by PEPFAR, and all five of the less densely populated highlands districts. Further, to reach its COP 2020 goals, PEPFAR Lesotho is more committed than ever to active partner management and accountability, engaging the government of Lesotho in every possible way, and mobilizing all stakeholders to achieving these goals. Another significant change from COP 2019 is an increased emphasis on community-led monitoring activities carried out through close collaboration with the Government of Lesotho and civil society to ensure high-quality, client-centered HIV services at the facility level.

Funding Summary

All COP 2020 funding summarized in the chart below is approved at the agency and account levels as indicated. Funds are to be used to achieve agreed upon targets and outcomes and to fund implementing partners and Management and Operations costs (U.S. Government Costs of Doing Business) as documented in all PEPFAR systems and summarized in the appendix.

2a. Bilateral COP 2020 Funding Table (by Agency)

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	Bilateral						Total Central Applied Pipeline	Total Bilateral Applied Pipeline	Total Bilateral New Funding	Total COP 20 Budget
	New Funding			Applied Pipeline		Central				
	FY20			FY19	Unspecified	Applied Pipeline				
	Total	GHP-State	GAP	Total	Total	Unspecified				
Lesotho										
DOD TOTAL	45,000	45,000						45,000	45,000	
HHS TOTAL	2,925,711	2,413,211	12,500		698,960		698,960	2,925,711	4,624,671	
HHS/CDC	2,925,711	2,413,211	12,500		698,960		698,960	2,925,711	4,624,671	
HHS/HRSA										
HHS/SAMHSA										
PEACECORPS TOTAL	41,304	41,304			5,314		5,314	41,304	76,618	
STATE TOTAL	37,216	37,216						37,216	37,216	
State(State,S/EUR,S/EAP,andS	87,216	87,216						87,216	87,216	
State/AF	50,000	50,000						50,000	50,000	
State/PRM										
State/SGAC										
USAID TOTAL	3,520,722	3,520,722			58,273	47,765	47,765	3,520,722	4,826,760	
USAID,non-WCF	4,466,102	4,466,102			58,273	47,765	47,765	4,466,102	1,772,140	
USAID,IBWCF	54,620	54,620						54,620	54,620	
TOTAL	79,069,953	6,557,453	12,500		2,292,547	47,765	47,765	2,292,547	2,110,265	

* Pipeline refers to funding allocated in prior years, approved for implementation in FY 2021

GHP-State Funds: Upon the clearance of a FY 2020 PEPFAR GHP-State Congressional Notification (CN), funds will be made available for transfer to agency HQs as indicated in the above chart. Funds are made available for outlay in FY 2021 at approved COP 2020 partner budget levels to achieve FY 2021 targets and outcomes as documented in official PEPFAR systems and summarized in the approval memo’s appendix. Upon receipt from S/GAC, agency headquarters will move the funds to the country platform via each agency’s internal process.

CDC GAP Funds: With the receipt of this signed memo, CDC is approved to use CDC GAP funds, as indicated in the above funding chart. Funds are to be made available for outlay in FY 2021 at approved COP 2020 partner budget levels to achieve FY 2021 targets and outcomes as documented in official PEPFAR systems and summarized in the approval memo’s appendix. With this approval, CDC GAP funding may be made available to country teams per CDC internal processes and following agency requirements.

Applied Pipeline Funds: With the receipt of this signed memo, respective agencies are approved to use applied pipeline funds as indicated in the above funding chart. Funds are to be made available for outlay in FY 2021 at approved COP 2020 partner budget levels to achieve FY 2021 targets and outcomes as documented in official PEPFAR systems and summarized in the approval memo’s appendix. Additional or remaining pipeline from previous year’s activities that are not currently captured in the COP 2020 total budget level and documented within COP 2020 partner budgets are not to be executed or outlaid without written approval from S/GAC.

Initiatives By Agency

2b. Bilateral COP 2020 Funding Table (by Agency and Initiative)

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	Total Central Applied Pipeline	Total Bilateral Applied Pipeline	Total Bilateral New Funding	Total COP20 Budget
Lesotho				
TOTAL	47,765	2,292,547	9,069,953	2,110,265
of which, Ambition			3,500,000	3,500,000
of which, Cervical Cancer			1,000,000	1,000,000
of which, Core Program		2,292,547	4,469,953	6,762,500
of which, DREAMS			4,000,000	4,000,000
of which, HKID Requirement			5,000,000	5,000,000
of which, KPIF	47,765			47,765
of which, MMC			1,100,000	1,100,000
DOD TOTAL			45,000	45,000
of which, Core Program			10,000	10,000
of which, MMC			5,000	5,000
HHS TOTAL		1,698,960	2,925,711	4,624,671
HHS/CDC		1,698,960	2,925,711	4,624,671
of which, Ambition			80,000	80,000
of which, Cervical Cancer			30,000	30,000
of which, Core Program		1,698,960	2,794,769	3,942,729
of which, DREAMS			221,942	221,942
HHS/HRSA				
HHS/SAMHSA				
PEACE CORPS TOTAL		5,314	41,304	76,618
of which, Core Program		5,314	31,304	16,618
of which, HKID Requirement			6,000	6,000
STATE TOTAL			37,216	73,216
State (State, IS/EUR, IS/EAP, and IS/WHA)			37,216	73,216
of which, Core Program			37,216	73,216
State/AF			50,000	50,000
of which, Core Program			50,000	50,000
State/PRM				
State/SGAC				
USAID TOTAL	47,765	58,273	3,520,722	4,826,760
USAID, non-WCF	47,765	58,273	4,466,102	1,772,140
of which, Ambition			120,000	120,000
of which, Cervical Cancer			20,000	20,000
of which, Core Program		58,273	2,943,044	1,501,317
of which, DREAMS			778,058	778,058
of which, HKID Requirement			940,000	940,000
of which, KPIF	47,765			47,765
of which, MMC			1,065,000	1,065,000
USAID, WCF			3,054,620	3,054,620
of which, Core Program			3,054,620	3,054,620
TOTAL	47,765	2,292,547	9,069,953	2,110,265

Earmarks: PEPFAR Lesotho has planned for programming for FY 2020, FY 2019 or/ or FY 2017 funding that it considered to meet a number of earmarks, as indicated in the table below. The amounts programmed during COP may exceed the original controls assigned to PEPFAR Lesotho. Upon approval of this memo, the amounts below will become the new earmark controls for the OU/Agency. Any changes to the amount of funding programmed for earmark-eligible activities must be approved via an Operational Plan Update (OPU).

3. COP 2020 Earmarks

Earmarks	COP20 Funding Level			
	FY20	FY19	FY17	Total
Care and treatment	43,891,180			43,891,180
Orphans and vulnerable children	6,900,000			6,900,000
Preventing and responding to gender-based violence	8,000			8,000
Water	30,000			30,000

eFY 2021 Target Summary

FY 2020 funds are released and COP 2020 applied pipeline is approved to achieve the following results in FY 2021:

4. Performance Targets by Indicator

Lesotho		SNU Prioritizations					Total
		Attained	Scale-Up: Saturation	Scale-Up: Aggressive	Sustained	Centrally Supported	
HTS_INDEX	<15		10,098				10,098
	15+		37,182				37,539
	Total		47,280				47,637
HTS_TST	<15		53,292				53,292
	15+		25,859				26,450
	Total		79,151				79,742
HTS_TST_POS	<15		509				509
	15+		16,537				16,620
	Total		17,046				17,129
TX_NEW	<15		706				706
	15+		5,710				5,791
	Total		6,416				6,497
TX_CURR	<15		10,067				10,067
	15+		301,396				302,961
	Total		311,463				313,028
TX_PVLS	<15		9,368				9,368
	15+		282,078				283,541
	Total		291,446				292,909
CXCA_SCRN	Total (<15+)		59,827				50,063
OVC_SERV	<18		69,491				69,491
	18+		2,861				2,861
	Total		2,352				52,352
OVC_HIVSTAT	Total (<18)		69,491				69,491
PMTCT_STAT	<15		126				126
	15+		37,206				37,272
	Total		37,332				37,398
PMTCT_STAT_POS	<15		126				126
	15+		9,546				9,552
	Total		9,672				9,678
PMTCT_ART	<15		126				126
	15+		9,451				9,457
	Total		9,577				9,583
PMTCT_EID	Total		9,215				9,221
PP_PREV	<15		1,328				1,328
	15+		81,604				81,604
	Total		222,932				222,932
KP_PREV	Total		6,599				6,599
KP_MAT	Total						
VMMC_CIRC	Total		20,219				20,426
HTS_SELF	<15		2,321				2,342
	15+		160,170				163,401
	Total		162,491				165,743
PrEP_NEW	Total		20,895				20,895
PrEP_CURR	Total		21,940				21,940
TB_STAT(N)	<15		625				625
	15+		9,317				9,365
	Total		9,942				9,990
TB_ART(N)	<15		622				622
	15+		5,747				5,795
	Total		6,369				6,417
TB_PREV(N)	<15		21,916				21,916
	15+		3,841				4,038
	Total		25,757				25,954
TX_TB(D)	<15		24,702				24,702
	15+		50,987				51,209
	Total		75,689				75,911
GEND_GBV	Total		2,260				2,260

* Totals may be greater than the sum of categories due to activities outside of the SNU prioritization areas outlined above

COP 2019 Performance Funds:

All partners must be managed throughout the implementation year as indicated in the COP guidance. Overall performance including activities tied to COP 2019 performance will be reviewed at Quarter 3 of FY 2020 to determine if the programs are on track to access all funds at the start of COP 2020. This communication will come through the S/GAC Chair and POART process.

Faith and Communities Initiative (FCI) / Faith Based Organization (FBO) Surge Programming:

In light of the delays in FCI programming associated with delayed arrival of funds for FCI and/or new sub-prime partners for FCI funding received in COP 2019, FCI funds from COP 2019 will be protected and can be outlayed during COP 2020, in excess of the new COP 2020 total budget amount indicated in this memo, without being considered an over-outlay. Activities related to FCI/FBO surge activities must be fully implemented by the end of COP 2020/FY 2021.

Partner Management and Stakeholder Engagement:

Agreements made during COP discussions, including those regarding geographic focus, targets, budgets, SIMS, use of pipeline, partner implementation, and partner management will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis via both ad hoc check-ins and discussions as well as the joint HQ and country team POART discussions. It is expected that teams will closely monitor partner performance and engage with each implementing partner on a regular basis to ensure achievement of targets, outcomes, and impact in a manner consistent with this memo, the approved Strategic Direction Summary, and budgets and targets as finalized in PEPFAR systems. Any partner with EITHER (1) <15% of target achievement at 3 months or (2) less than 40% of target achievement at 6 months must have a complete review of performance data (including trends in performance) and expenditures to date by program area, implement remediation, and conduct intensive follow-up. In the HIV treatment program, most clients are continuing on treatment year after year and current on treatment (TX_CURR) performance should be between 98% and 100% of the target. This can be adjusted in country context where HIV treatment services are still scaling up and the treatment new target is greater than 10% of treatment current. OVC programs are also similar in that there are clients continuing services from the previous year; if an implementing partner (IP) is at less than 80% of their target at Q2, performance review should be triggered. These elements (i.e. review, remediation, and follow-up) should be incorporated into the existing IP work plans. A second quarter of consistently poor performance by the IP should also result in implementation of a documented Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or Corrective Action Plan (CAP), in accordance with implementing agency policy. PIP indicators should reflect the core issue. If the issue is linkage of those who test HIV positive to treatment, the indicator measured should be test positive to new in treatment of greater than 90%. If the issue is retention it should be net new on treatment equal to 90% of new on treatment. After two quarters of intensive oversight and remediation for underperformance, partners should be close to full achievement of targets expected at Quarter 3. With a third quarter of consistently poor performance by the IP, implementing agencies should notify S/GAC of the options the agency is implementing to address partner non-performance, including options for a shift to new partners. The country team should notify the S/GAC Chair and PPM immediately of the improvement plan.

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Continued engagement with all stakeholders, including civil society and community members, multilateral partners, and bilateral partners, is to continue throughout COP implementation. Core to this critical engagement is the sharing of and discussion surrounding quarterly results and achievement and findings from community-led monitoring. This continued engagement will ensure all parties' understanding of Lesotho's progress and help identify any strategic changes to be made in order to more efficiently and effectively reach epidemic control.

Pending Congressional Approval

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