

**Remarks by Ambassador Peterson
Launch of One Stop Centers
Mbabane Government Hospital
March 9, 2020**

Honorable Minister of Justice,
Honorable Minister of Health,
UNICEF Representative
All protocols observed

It is an honor to be with you today to launch the new One Stop Centers—a critically important resource for survivors of gender-based violence, or GBV, to find help, counseling, and comfort during a time of extreme distress. Today, I am proud to be here with you to celebrate a rare moment of triumph in the fight against gender-based violence and violence against children.

Unfortunately, violence remains rampant in communities, in families, in work places and on the streets. Everyone, all of us, including boys and men, may be at risk of gender-based violence at one point or another in our lives; however, most vulnerable are girls and women, and special needs groups such as those living with disabilities. The statistics are startling: 1 in 5 Swazi women will experience some form of GBV in their lifetimes.

out of the One Stop Center initiative to Manzini and Lubombo, but also the relocation of the first center to the hospital grounds in Mbabane where services are available 24 hours, and where serious medical injuries can be treated on site. The U.S. Government is proud to have helped the establishment of all three centers with PEPFAR resources at the three hospitals in Mbabane, Manzini, and Siteki.

The PEPFAR program continues to assist the country in its efforts to prevent and mitigate the epidemic of violence, as violence and HIV feed off each other. Our implementers support clinicians in public health facilities across the country to ensure survivors of abuse receive a full package of post-violence services, including Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) no later than 72 hours after rape to ensure the victim does not get infected with HIV. Through family and community support in our Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) program, PEPFAR partners collaborate with the Department of Social Welfare and law enforcement agencies to ensure that cases of abuse are identified and receive support and are brought to justice.

Eswatini has come a long way in the fight against GBV, and I laud you all for that. Yet, we can go further with the political will and dedication we see today in the country and in this room. First, we need to make sure that **everyone knows how to find the new One Stop Centers!** This is vitally important. Talk about it on the radio, in schools, in churches, in your speeches. We must train first

staff of the One Stop Center for their dedicated service at the old site, and for their future commitment to this new one.

I appeal to the ministries and leaders in this room to continue your commitment to ending gender-based violence in Eswatini. This One Stop Center, providing comfort and a place of healing for survivors to rediscover dignity and hope, is an important step along that road.

Siyabonga