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## Nairobi Coptic Hospital Opens New Infectious Disease Centre

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coptic Hospital Opens New Infectious Disease Centre

"This is more than a place where people can receive Anti-Retroviral Drugs, Treatment, and Counseling, but it is a place of love and hope for the hopeless," proclaimed His Grace Bishop Paul of the Coptic Orthodox Church at the opening ceremony of the Hope Centre of Infectious Diseases at the Coptic Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Opening Ceremony, held on 1 February, celebrated the creation of the centre, which will provide patients with volunteer HIV/AIDS testing, clinical assessments, a variety of counseling services, and support group services. All services are free of charge. In addition to direct care provided to patients, the centre also acts as a regional training centre for health professionals dealing with HIV/AIDS.

The Hope Centre is a joint effort of the Coptic Orthodox Church and The University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, USA, and also receives support from the United States Government and the University of Nairobi.

In addition to His Grace Bishop Paul, speakers included Prof. King Holmes of the University of Washington, a prominent medical researcher whose work focuses primarily on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and the American ambassador to Kenya, William M. Bellamy.

In his remarks, Holmes emphasized that the standard of care would be on the level with that which is offered in the United States, while appropriately adapting the clinics delivery of services to a Kenyan context "We can be culturally sensitive," Holmes remarked, "without compromising the quality of care."

Bellamy emphasized that the name of the centre—hope—is a core element in the fight against HIV/AIDS, but also emphasized that without the commitment of financial resources from the international community and responsible use of those resources by the Kenyan government, hope is not enough.

Citing the fact that the Kenyan government has only used a small fraction of grant money it has received to fight HIV/AIDS, Bellamy maintained that "hope delayed is too often hope denied when you're living with HIV/AIDS."

The ceremony climaxed with a symbolic lighting of a torch of hope by the speakers.

His Grace Bishop Paul is a former Vice President of the All Africa Conference of Churches.

Source: All Africa Conference of Churches, Nairobi, Kenya

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