



FORMER PRESIDENT CLINTON ADDRESSES YOUTHFORCE

Dear members of the Bangkok Youth Force,

Two years ago, I attended the International AIDS Conference and was deeply impressed and inspired by the Barcelona YouthForce. This group of young men and women demonstrated extraordinary leadership and citizenship. I am sure that you, the members of the Bangkok Youth Force, will make your own mark at this year's conference and help educate the world community about the role that youth can and should play in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

The theme of the conference, "Access For All," is one I believe strongly in. After my experience in Barcelona, I decided to establish the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative to help expand access to care and treatment in the developing world. We, and the world community as a whole, have made real progress in these past two years. Young peo-

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ple have played an important role and will be pivotal to our efforts moving forward. If we continue to work together, we have much greater hope of overcoming the challenges that remain before us and, ultimately, of turning the tide of the epidemic.

Thank you for bringing your energy, creativity and dedication not only to this gathering, but to the battle against HIV/AIDS. I look forward to seeing what you will do

this week and, more importantly, what you will do in your home countries.

-Bill Clinton

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ALICIA KEYS FIGHTING HIV/AIDS

when I went to South Africa with MTV to investigate the HIV/AIDS pandemic for myself. No awareness of numbers could have prepared me for the intense personal experience of being in the middle of the world's worst health crisis. I relive the experience often. I must do this, because I live in a country with a shocking ability to dismiss things that matter.

I ask myself, will we really ever be able to stop the infection of 8000 people every day? Given the millions infected, is there any chance at all that we can deliver medication even to the woefully inadequate number of 3 million people by 2005, as the WHO ambitiously aspires?

Is there any remote possibility that we will reach any targets to which

governments committed at the UN Special Session on AIDS?

One part of me knows that most of these targets are hot air. They seem so far away, so out of reach. Sometimes I feel a little disconnected. The optimist in me however, is awoken when I see

"Do not let this meeting be the last thing you do about HIV/AIDS until 2006 when the next conference rolls around."

how the acts of individual committed people, including young people, make a difference. I cannot sit and complain about the woeful inadequacy of any plan someone else has put in place, if I am not doing anything myself.

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I am a fortunate young woman born in North America. Had I been born in a village in any given developing country, chances are high that I would not have adequate information to know how to protect myself from HIV, and if, infected, that I almost certainly would not have access to treatment.

But I do not like talking probabilities. They are confusing, impersonal. I realized this

AIDS in Kenya: Lamenting in Action

Tomu, the son of my father's sister, lies in bed with wounds and coughs and collapsing body organs and every ailment generated by a weak immune system. He has just killed his pubescent wife by loving her typically: he wandered off and sought death and pestilence, while she unquestioningly embraced him, submissive as all women of my Ruthian family who tell their men, *wherever you die, there shall I die, and there shall I be buried beside you.*

Their one-year-old daughter must now come to our extended family for care, alongside the orphaned children of my extended family. My mother is heartbroken as she explains this tragedy to me on the phone. Men have always done exactly as they pleased, she says. Now the girls, the women, and even the men are beginning to die, leaving behind a legion of babies.

My mother will take Tomu into our house and take care of him. He cannot stay at the Kisii general hospital; there are others who are in much worse condition.

Through all of this, I will be in New York sitting on various HIV/AIDS committees, yet

powerless to influence the agendas of the career activists who are devoid of the kind of emotion I feel when I consider the future of my niece.

"When will they trip on our corpses on the streets, so that we, the forsaken ones, may once again be found?"

My house is theatre central, but as these angels of mercy upon whose actions we hold our breath enter stage right, parade a little orphanage in Nairobi and a major report here, a lowered ARV price and a new conference there—and reap incredible media mileage—I realize we are on different scripts. They will talk about the HIV/AIDS crisis and the need for coherent strategies and call meetings at Harvard to contemplate and strategize. In the meantime, my family will continue to bury those we love.

As Mwana wa Nzeki, the condom-burning bishop of the Catholic Church in Kenya told

me a while ago, how dare I imply that anyone, least of all the church, had a role in AIDS prevention other than denouncing the sinful nature of extra-marital sex?

In this view, the world has no responsibility towards my niece and her kind. While I hope my niece lives to see the huts painted at Christmas and the chickens hatching and the thunderstorms and the birds eating the millet and the harvest in the granaries, her world is rapidly coming to an end. My little niece is John the Baptist and the world is Herod, offering her head on a silver plate to some indefensible morals.

I contemplate this land of my birth, wallowing in famine and death, as our carcasses feed the birds of the air. When will they trip on our corpses on the streets, so that we, the forsaken ones, may once again be found? In our jeremiad, our unpoetic lamentation, this suffering has no end, no final chapter with an offer of hope. Whose teeth shall we break?

Lydia Kemunto Bosire is a board member for Youth Against AIDS and Keep a Child Alive, and editor for the YouthForce Newsletter (lydiahb@hotmail.com)

ALICIA KEYS: POP STAR, YOUTHFORCE SUPPORTER

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After South Africa altered my view of the world, there were two things I could have done: continue with my privileged American life, or do something.

I joined Keep a Child Alive (www.keepachildalive.org), an organization that enables individuals like you and me to pay a dollar a day to pay for ARV medication of children in Africa. It's very little money, considering all that the children get. It's silly, a dollar a day. Something we throw away money to buy something stupid, when we can save someone's life instead. And the entire amount

"I am hopeful because initiatives like the YouthForce remind the world that youth are indispensable partners in this fight."

goes to getting medication into people. It doesn't go to pay the light bill at someone's office. Of course this is a drop in the ocean, but if you change only one life in your whole life, my God, you're a hero.

We need action. That is what I find most truly inspiring about Bangkok YouthForce, it is about

young people standing up and making a commitment to address this HIV/AIDS crisis that is predominantly young. But this conference must not be the end of it. Do not let this meeting be the last thing you do about HIV/AIDS until 2006 when the next conference rolls around.

We, the youth of the world, cannot wait for presidents and health ministers to reach goals for us, because we will be disappointed. We cannot wait until conditions are perfect in order to take much needed action. They'll never be perfect. We cannot wave placards and complain and call the world evil, if we are not personally involved in

creating change. We have to act and persuade our leaders to join us.

I am hopeful because initiatives like the YouthForce remind the world that youth are indispensable partners in this fight. I have so much respect for all of you.

Alicia Keys, singer and songwriter, is also the spokesperson for Keep a Child Alive (www.keepachildalive.org). Thanks to Leigh Blake, President and CEO of Keep A Child Alive, for this article.

GUIDE TO YOUTH-FOCUSED SESSIONS AT THE CONFERENCE

Oral Sessions

Date	Time	Venue	Title
12 July	10:30	CV Room 12	Global Village Session: Role of Young People in the Third Decade of AIDS
12 July	14:00	Session Room M	Asian Youth Forum
12 July	14:00	Session Room N	Meeting Our Rights to Prevention and Care—Young People Speak Out on “Access to All”
12 July	18:00	Room A	The Power of Media in HIV Prevention: Hype or Help?
13 July	10:30	Session Room L	Youth Question Leaders
13 July	10:30	CV Room 12	Myth and Reality: Changing Perceptions of HIV
13 July	14:00	Session Room J	Youth at Risk: Facing the Challenges
13 July	14:00	Session Room A	Special Meet the Leaders: Political Leadership
13 July	18:00	Session Room M	Strengthening Education Sector Responses to HIV/AIDS
13 July	20:15	Session Room J	Towards an HIV-free Generation: Lessons and Experiences from Large-scale Youth HIV/AIDS Prevention Programming Research
14 July	08:30	Session Room A	Ensuring Access for Youth and Women
14 July	12:00	Session Room L	Our Orphans, Our Children: Community Action Forum Toward National Commitments
14 July	14:00	Session Room K	Youth Sexual Rights and Reproductive Health
14 July	14:00	Session Room N	At the Crossroads: Accelerating Youth Access to HIV/AIDS Services
14 July	16:00	Session Room J	Positive Youth
15 July	10:30	Session Room M	Pledging Action: Political, Religious, and Youth Leadership to Fight HIV/AIDS in South Asia
15 July	10:30	CV Room 12	Youth and Changing Society
15 July	14:00	Session Room M	Youth Closing Forum
16 July	08:30	Session Room A	Overcoming Challenges Through Empowerment

Satellite Sessions

Date	Time	Venue	Title
11 July	09:00	Hall J	Youth Forum (Orientation to the conference)
	09:30	Session Room B	Putting Sexuality Back into HIV/AIDS—Present Context, Future Directions
12 July	20:15	Session Room A	Getting the Balance Right: Integrating HIV/AIDS Into Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Programs—Success Stories from Around the Globe

Skills Building Workshops

Date	Time	Venue	Title
12 July	10:30	EC Room 4	How Firm a Foundation: Fortifying Youth HIV Prevention Programs
12 July	10:30	EC Room 7	Ensuring Youth Input in Developing International HIV/AIDS Programming: Strategies for Making our Voices Heard
12 July	10:30	AR Room 5	Training for Adaptable and Effective Interventions with Sexual Minority Youth, Youth Adults, and Young MSMs.
12 July	14:00	EC Room 4	The Way Forward—Emphasizing HIV Positive Youth
13 July	10:30	EC Room 5	Keeping it Real: Developing a Youth Peer Education Program that Works
13 July	14:00	EC Room 5	Building Effective Peer Education Outreach Programs for High-Risk Behavior Groups
14 July	10:30	CV Room 10	Writing Effective Abstracts
14 July	14:00	CV Room 10	We are All Leaders, But How Do We Inspire?

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE XV INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE, VISIT
WWW.YOUTHANDHIV.ORG/BANGKOK



THE BANGKOK YOUTHFORCE

The Bangkok YouthForce is an international network of youth activists and adult allies from both the developing and developed world attending the XV International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The YouthForce first debuted in 2002 at the XIV AIDS Conference in Barcelona. It is composed of YouthNet/Family Health International, Advocates for Youth, PATH, Save the Children, MTV's Staying Alive Campaign, YouthAIDS, UNAIDS, The Student Global AIDS Campaign, Thai Youth AIDS Prevention Project (TYAP), Youth Against AIDS, Deloitte Emerging Markets, and The Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS.

For information on the Bangkok YouthForce during the conference :

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BANGKOK YOUTHFORCE ACTIVITIES

BYF Visibility Campaign

Date: Monday, July 12th - Friday, July 16th
Time: Throughout
Location: Everywhere

Don't be shy! Wear our stickers, talk to Bangkok YouthForce members, and pass the message that "more youth voices = fewer HIV infections." Join youth and adult leaders working to increase the visibility of youth and highlight the importance of fostering partnerships in the fight against AIDS.

Press Conference

Date: Tuesday, July 13th
Time: 14:00 - 15:00
Location: Room C

Asian pop star and YouthAIDS Ambassador to Asia CoCo Lee, with Kami the Muppet, will introduce five

members of the Bangkok YouthForce personally affected by AIDS. Media will hear stories of infection, experiences with loss, and personal triumph from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

BYF Networking Sessions

Time: 17:30 - 19:00
Room: Global Village Room CV12

Tuesday July 13th
Getting More from the Global Fund: Youth Advocacy in Donor and Recipient Countries

What role do youth have to play in supporting and benefiting from the work of the Global Fund? In this session, we will present and discuss case studies from youth on how the Fund works in both donor and recipient countries.

Wednesday July 14th
Building Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS

Everyone talks about it - but how do you actually do it? This interactive session will share strategies to work with organizations for greater youth-adult partnerships. It will assist adult-led institutions in gaining greater and more effective youth involvement and youth-led institutions in gaining greater adult professional participation.

Thursday July 15th
Building Bridges from New York to Nigeria: Creating Stronger, More Sustainable Partnerships Between Youth AIDS Activists Across the World

During each major international HIV/AIDS conference, young people have expressed a desire to build sustainable partnerships with youth from other nations. Despite efforts made to create a global youth activist network, the challenge of building long-lasting, substantive partnerships between youth across regions and nations still remains. This workshop will explore new strategies for strengthening existing relationships and building new ones.