



Stars and activists turn out to 'Unite for an AIDS-Free Generation'

Alicia Keys, Annie Lennox, Bill Gates were part of an inspirational evening to usher in the beginning of the end of AIDS

WASHINGTON, DC/GENEVA, 21 July 2012—On the eve of the opening of the historic International AIDS Conference, a stellar cast of artists, political leaders, and community activists came to Washington, D.C. to mark more than three decades of the global response to the HIV epidemic.

The event, held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, united some of the leading voices in the global effort to achieve an AIDS-free generation. Participants included Bill Gates, Alicia Keys, Annie Lennox, Joan Osborne, Patti Austin, Herbie Hancock, bipartisan members of Congress, and prominent AIDS advocates from the worlds of business, science, and civil society.

Uniting for an AIDS-free generation—the theme of the event—took the audience on a historical journey through the history of AIDS, highlighting the early days of the epidemic and key milestones in the world's response to the disease. Through music and personal anecdotes, guests shared experiences of how HIV has shaped society and brought forward a global movement never before witnessed for a disease.

"I come to Washington with a dream: the dream of getting to zero. The great Martin Luther King said, 'Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?' It is a question all leaders must ask themselves," said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. "The 30-year journey of AIDS has been marked with the extraordinary courage of those who answered this question—who guided us on this road that has not always been easy or straight. It is thanks to the solidarity of many partners, such as ONE, the Business Leadership Council and the Nelson Mandela Foundation, that the dream of ending AIDS is steadily becoming a reality."

"Events like this remind me of the exceptional community dedicated to the fight against AIDS. It is truly an effort that unites people from every corner of the world, of all political persuasions and faiths, in an effort to rid our planet of this epidemic," said Michael Elliott, the CEO of ONE. "This is an historic opportunity for us to renew our commitments in the fight against AIDS. Let's grasp that opportunity."

UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador and musician Annie Lennox said, "For thirty years, global HIV activists and campaigners have been working to create the effective and lasting changes we need to see before we reach the stage of zero HIV infections. We are now at a crucial point in history when we could actually see the dream become a reality in our lifetime. It is therefore, absolutely imperative that we see this thing through. We can, and we must."

Renowned musician and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Herbie Hancock, who performed with Ms Lennox, added "We hope the music and words tonight will continue to inspire the world to end AIDS. We need everyone to join their voices in solidarity with people living with HIV."

Other highlights of the evening included a performance by the African Children's Choir and remarks from Valerie Jarrett, Miss Barbara Bush, Sen. Norman Coleman (R-Minn.), Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Tony Fauci, Kay Warren, Shelea Frazier, Jake Glaser, Cleve Jones, Noerine Kaleeba, Vicki Kennedy, Kweku Mandela, John Megrue, Andrea Mitchell, Aaron Motsoaledi (Minister of Health, South Africa) Jackline Odongo, and Jurnee Smollett.

The event kicked off the weeklong AIDS 2012 conference, being held in the U.S. for the first time in more than two decades.

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ABOUT UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

ABOUT ONE

ONE is a global advocacy and campaigning organization co-founded by Bono and backed by more than 3 million people from around the world dedicated to fighting extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. For more information please visit www.ONE.org.