

United States of America  
White House Faith-Based and Community Initiative  
Innovations in Effective Compassion Conference

AMBASSADOR KIMONYO: Thank you very much. I am also a former Governor. (Laughter.) And I now privileged to serve my country and this great nation as an Ambassador. My task this afternoon is to introduce a friend and a humble man, that I have ever seen, a public servant who has demonstrated extraordinary efficiency and a capacity to serve American people and the other nations. And this man is Ambassador Mark Dybul.

Ambassador Mark Dybul serves as the United States Global AIDS Coordinator, leading the implementation of President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. He previously served on the planning task force for the emergency plan, and was the lead for the Department of Health and Human Services for President Bush's International Prevention of Mother and Child HIV Initiative. Ambassador Dybul is a physician and holds the rank of Assistant Surgeon General and Rear Admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. He is also a former member of the World Health Organization's Writing Committee, to develop global HIV therapy guidelines. He lives in Washington, but he is from Wisconsin. Please join me to welcome Ambassador Dybul. (Applause.)

AMBASSADOR DYBUL: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, and thank you for the partnership of the people of Rwanda in the fight against global HIV/AIDS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here and for your inspirational comments. Thanks to Jay Hein for his leadership and his friendship to all of us, and to me personally. It is really wonderful to be here with all of you today to discuss a great work of compassion - the President's emergency plan for AIDS relief, also known as PEPFAR. It is the largest international health initiative in history dedicated to a single disease. It's a rather extraordinary statement with strong bipartisan support.

The American people will commit \$18.8 billion for five years to achieve aggressive goals to turn the tide against HIV/AIDS. President Bush set very aggressive goals for us as a people. The American people will support treatment for two million HIV- positive individuals, will support the prevention of seven million new infections, and will support care for ten million people, including the least of these, orphans and vulnerable children.

We are well on our way to achieving these goals, and the President will provide you an update in a few minutes. Why have the American people made this massive commitment of treasure and of our heart? Well, the principal reason is humanitarian, and I think one most people in this room would understand.

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Twenty million people have died from this disease globally -- 20 million people. And we couldn't stand by and watch the 40 million people who are currently infected also die, nor could we stand by and observe as millions upon millions more became infected.

As President Bush often quotes, "To whom much is given, much is required." And it's that impulse that led to this massive effort. But HIV/AIDS is also somewhat unique. Unlike most diseases that kill the very young or very old, HIV/AIDS kills 15- to 50-year olds, the most productive and reproductive part of society. HIV/AIDS is decimating a generation of parents, teachers, health care workers, bread winners, and peacekeepers, rending the social fabric, and creating hopelessness and despair. And where there is hopelessness and despair, there is a breeding ground for radicalism, and that is not in our interest. But we also made this massive commitment to fight HIV/AIDS because we knew it could be done.

Five years ago the skeptic said it couldn't be done, the goals couldn't be met. And we're proving them wrong. We knew it could be done, because PEPFAR is part of what President Bush has called "a new era in development" -- a new era that is founded in the dignity and worth of every human life, a new era that moves beyond notions of donors and recipients with a foundation and partnership between equals, with the belief that with a little support seemingly ordinary people will do extraordinary things. And a new era based on achieving results and measuring success by lives saved and people lifted up.

Together we have proven the skeptics wrong, and we have shattered the pernicious and paternalistic myth that people in resource-poor countries could not manage complex chronic diseases and, in fact, can scale them up on national and continental scale. Although the expansion of HI prevention and treatment services has been national and continental in scale, it begins one person, one family, one community at a time. And that is why the faith- and community-based organizations are so important to us, because they have a reach and credibility in the hearts and lives of individuals, families, and communities. Tribal leaders and traditional healers, pastors and moms, monks, rabbis, bishops, and patriarchs, friends and neighbors, are serving one another, restoring life and hope. And as one community-based volunteer in Zambia said, "They are doing it out of love."

Faith communities also own and operate many of the medical facilities that bring health and healing in the developing world. The World Health Organization estimates that 30 to 70 percent of health care in sub-Saharan African is provided by faith- based organizations. We don't have very good statistics, but I would guess that 90 percent of orphan care is provided by faith- and community-based organizations.

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And because of the reach and credibility in the community, faith- and community-based organizations are key partners in changing behaviors for a healthy lifestyle to prevent HIV infection.

Put simply, the emergency plan could not succeed without the active engagements of faith- and community-based organizations. And so we have sought participation of these organizations in all aspects of the program, and we are encouraged by the fact that more than 80 percent of our partners are local organizations, and 22 percent are faith-based organizations. But we can do better. We know that government grants can seem, and in fact are, cumbersome and difficult. And we know there has not always been a level playing field for faith- and community-based organizations. So to encourage greater participation of these groups with reach and deep commitment in communities, President Bush launched the New Partners Initiative, a \$200 million effort to provide technical support and capacity-building in managing U.S. Government grants, but also so that these organizations could provide services. So far, 50 percent of the New Partner grantees are faith-based organizations.

We will continue our efforts to expand opportunities for faith- and community-based organizations because we know we cannot succeed in the American people's effort to turn the tide against HIV/AIDS without them. But I would also like to gently challenge the organizations to do more, to seek opportunities to grow in capacity and to manage government grants, or to be in consortia that manage such grants, to expand abilities to monitor, evaluate, and report on the good work you are doing. In some traditions, we are called not to be a light under a bushel, but a light atop a mountain, as a beacon to all, showing the way. And sometimes that requires moving past our own comfort zone, learning new approaches and methodologies, and learning new techniques to share knowledge and wisdom with others.

You know, we talk a lot about number of people served, number of lives saved. But it really comes from the community, and the communities tell us the impact of these programs. Sam Gbende in Kampala Uganda describes the impact of the President's emergency plan in his community. He said five years ago, on weekends, the streets of Kampala were filled with coffins and hearses, because in Africa many people go home to their world homes to be buried. And so many people were dying from HIV/AIDS that literally the streets were packed with coffins and hearses. Now, on the weekends, the streets of Kampala have been returned to the normal congested and awful traffic that Kampala should have -- of cars and people and bicycles and a general cacophony of normal life. That is the impact of HIV/AIDS in Kampala. (Applause.)

These programs are not only good for communities abroad, they are good for our own communities. As President Bush has said, these types of programs are good for our national conscience,

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our national soul. They are also good for the view others have of Americans. People in distant lands know what we stand for when we stand with them. I was in rural Namibia not long ago. I visited a small clinic, St. Mary's Clinic, where we're -- that the American people are supporting. A young doctor there, one of the most brilliant people I have met, went through a beautiful slide presentation, very scientific, of the work and of the lives that were being saved, with the support of the American people. His last slide read, "God Bless America." God Bless America, in rural Namibia. (Applause.)

So much has been done, but so much more remains to be done. So looking to the future, let's continue to dare to dream, to have the temerity to hope, and the courage and openness of spirit to move forward together in the service of others. For as President Bush always quotes, to whom much is given, much is required. And working together, everything is possible. And now it's my great opportunity to announce what partnerships and possibility can do. I have the honor of announcing the winner of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative's Portraits of Compassion video contest, in the category of international service. I have actually seen the work of the awardee, and it is truly wonderful, life-giving, and work that lifts up the community. The winner is Free Wheelchair Mission. This organization provides high-quality, low-cost wheelchairs to individuals living in poverty around the world. These wheelchairs bring both mobility and an affirmation of dignity for many who have come to expect living without either. Since its founding in 2001, Free Wheelchair Mission has sent more than 300,000 wheelchairs to 76 countries, from Afghanistan to Malawi, from Nepal to Sudan. While most of their funding is raised privately, the U.S. Agency for International Development is proud to be a partner in Free Wheelchair Mission's good work. So now you have the privilege of seeing the video of this great work. Thank you very much. (Applause.)