

**Remarks on the President's
Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief**

May 30, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the Rose Garden. Today I'm joined by some very determined people who are battling one of the worst epidemics of modern times, the spread of HIV/AIDS.

I want to thank you all for being here. I'm honored to be in your presence. And I want to thank others who are joining us in this important cause as well, starting with Ambassador Mark Dybul, who is the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. He runs our PEPFAR initiative. Mark, thank you for being here, as well as Rajat Gupta, who is the chairman of the board of the Global Fight—Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Rajat, we're proud you're here.

He's told me something very interesting. Actually, he and I attended the same graduate school, and he said, "It's important for people who have been successful in the business world to contribute something back to society." And, Rajat, thank you for that spirit, and thank you for that compassion and concern.

Secretary Mike Leavitt is with us, the Department of Health and Human Services; Ambassador John Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State. I'm about to make an important initiative. I appreciate my—the members of my administration for joining us to hear this initiative.

The U.S. and our citizens have tackled HIV/AIDS aggressively. Many HIV-positive Americans are able to lead productive lives. The story has been quite different elsewhere, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

When I took office, an HIV diagnosis in Africa's poorest communities was usually a death sentence. Parents watched their babies die needlessly because local clinics lacked effective treatments. The story of a mother of Kenya affected me deeply, when she couldn't afford drugs, except for one person in her family. So she forgave her own treatment to save her son. Despairing families who had lost everything to AIDS started to believe that they had been cursed by the Almighty God. This modern-day plague robbed Africa and other countries of the hope of progress

and threatened to push many communities toward chaos.

The United States has responded vigorously to this crisis. In 2003, I asked Congress to approve an emergency plan for AIDS relief. Our Nation pledged \$15 billion over 5 years for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care in many of the poorest nations on Earth. In the years since, thanks to the support of the United States Congress and the American people, our country has met this pledge. This level of assistance is unprecedented and the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in human history.

This investment has yielded the best possible return: saved lives. To date, the emergency plan has supported treatment for 1.1 million people infected with HIV. This is a promising start, yet without further action, the legislation that funded this emergency plan is set to expire in 2008. Today I ask Congress to demonstrate America's continuing commitment to fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS by reauthorizing this legislation now. I ask Congress to double our initial commitment and approve an additional \$30 billion for HIV/AIDS prevention, for care, and for treatment over the next 5 years.

This money will be spent wisely through the establishment of partnership compacts with host nations. These compacts would ensure that U.S. funds support programs that have the greatest possible impact and are sustainable for the future. America will work with governments, the private sector, and faith and community-based organizations around the world to meet measurable goals: to support treatment for nearly 2.5 million people; to prevent more than 12 million new infections; and to support care for 12 million people, including more than 5 million orphans and vulnerable children.

To help assess the progress we have made to date, Laura, the First Lady, is going to go to Africa next month. She's going to meet with community leaders and visit with participants in HIV/AIDS programs during her trip to Zambia, Senegal, Mali, and Mozambique. And she's going to come back with her findings. I really thank her for her concern about HIV/AIDS. She and I share a passion. We believe strongly that to whom much

is given, much is required. Much has been given the United States of America. Therefore, I believe strongly, as does she, that much is required of us in helping solve this problem.

The statistics and dollar amounts I've cited in the fight against HIV/AIDS are significant, but the scale of this effort is not measured in numbers. This is really a story of the human spirit and the goodness of human hearts. Once again, the generosity of the American people is one of the great untold stories of our time. Our citizens are offering comfort to millions who suffer and restoring hope to those who feel forsaken.

You know, one good example of this good work is supported by—that the U.S. supports is called the Coptic Hope Center in Nairobi, Kenya. Three years ago, the center had a staff of four people and resources to treat no more than five HIV/AIDS patients a day. Today, the staff consists of 40 people and 10 volunteers who provided care and treatment services to over 6,000 people. I want to thank the Director of the Hope Center, Bishop Paul, who's with us today. I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank you for your leadership and for your care for your fellow human beings.

Dr. Bill Pape is with us as well. Dr. Pape is an expert on infectious diseases and founded in Haiti a leading HIV treatment program, which is a major PEPFAR partner. Dr. Pape has shown that even in the most difficult circumstances, dedicated and caring people can make great progress in fighting HIV/AIDS. We're sure proud you're here, doc. Thanks for coming.

Also with us is Kunene Tantoh. Kunene is HIV-positive. She coordinates a mentoring program, supported by U.S. funds, for other mothers with HIV in Cape Town, South Africa. Kunene is proof that people with HIV can live productive lives and make a significant difference in the lives of others. Kunene, I want to thank you for joining us. Thank you for bringing Baron. Baron is 4 years old, and he's letting us know. *[Laughter]* We appreciate you all coming. Thank you for the example you have set.

Similar success stories are playing out all across the African continent, where victims of HIV/AIDS are finding new reservoirs of

strength and support. Villages in Africa now talk of the Lazarus effect, dying communities being brought back to life, thanks to the compassion of the American people. This is the impact that has made our emergency plan and the modern-day, good Samaritans who are implementing it so effective. It's important that we continue the work we have begun.

I'm honored that you were here today. I'm honored to be representing a nation that cares deeply about the suffering of others. I look forward to working with Congress on this great and noble effort.

May God bless you all. May God continue to bless the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:14 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jean W. Pape, director, Haitian Study Group on Kaposi's Sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections; and Manyongo "Kunene" Mosima Tantoh, member, Mothers to Mothers-To-Be. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a New Jersey Republican Committee Reception in Edison, New Jersey

May 30, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Yes, it's good to be back in Jersey. Thank you for the warm welcome. I appreciate you all coming. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind remarks.

Audience members. We love you, Mr. President! We love you!

The President. Yes, well, last time I was in Jersey, there was a lot of heckling as well. *[Laughter]* Good heckling. *[Laughter]* I love you too. Thank you. Thanks for coming. Thank you for your enthusiasm. Thank you for supporting the Republican Party.

Mr. Chairman, I am glad to come and help you raise money so that you can achieve big things—first of all, taking those New Jersey houses in the November '07 election and laying the groundwork for an important election in '08. It is important that a Republican succeed me as President of the United States, and I thank you for supporting those efforts.