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Health and Human Services (HHS) Speeches

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PLACE: Commemorating World Aids Day, Hubert H. Humphrey Building,  
Washington, D.C.  
DATE: December 2, 2002

In Recognition of World AIDS Day

Thanks, Claude (Allen) for that kind introduction. You're a fine American and a good friend - and I'm proud to have you on our team.

Let me welcome B-E-T Urban Nation H.I.P. H.O.P. Choir for sharing their wonderful music with us. Welcome also to Luis (Cortez III of Nueva Esperanza) and Mary (Fisher, AIDS educator). Thank you both for joining us today.

And let me welcome everyone here to our commemoration of World AIDS Day. It's so very important that we mark this day, my friends. The scourge of AIDS has been with us for over twenty years, and still it takes the lives of our friends and loved ones ... still it cripples whole communities ... and still it ravages entire nations in places like southern Africa.

I've seen it with my own eyes. In Africa, I've seen the generations, young and old, who have lost all hope. In America, I've seen the resolute survivors who have struggled with HIV for years, waiting for a cure. And I've seen the orphans from around the world - children orphaned by AIDS, and too often victims of HIV/AIDS themselves.

And just this past week, we found that for the first time ever, half of all AIDS victims are women.

The problem is real. And the solution lies with us. We can and must make a difference. We can do it by marching in the front ranks of what the President called "the armies of compassion." That means volunteering ... caring for the sick ... and educating the uninfected. There is no higher calling than selfless service to your community.

And we can make a difference by devoting the resources of our great country to defeating AIDS forever. We're well on our way - just this month, our National Institutes of Health announced the first-ever human tests of an HIV vaccine. That's a real step forward ... and a powerful message that this disease can and will be stopped.

Make no mistake - the Bush Administration is committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with the American people ... and the people of the world ... in the fight against AIDS.

We have increased overall AIDS spending from \$14.2 billion in 2001 to more than \$16 billion for next year. That includes a doubling in international HIV/AIDS funding over the same period.

And we're strongly committed to supporting the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The President has requested almost \$500 million for the Global Fund - far more than any other nation.

And we're committed to making AIDS information accessible to the American

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public. I'm proud to report that the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health are cooperating to launch a one-stop website for information on HIV/AIDS.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, my friends. This fight against AIDS is not over - but for the first time in decades, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. You, and all those who share your passion and dedication, have made it happen. Now, let's move forward together to the day when every one of us can live free of the fear of AIDS.

May God bless you all.