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Bush: God has called us

11/07/2003 19:04 - (SA)

Entebbe, Uganda - US President George W Bush on Friday met Ugandan victims

Print article

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sweeping Africa and praised his host President Yoweri Museveni for helping to stem the rise of the killer disease in his country.

"It's one thing to hear about the ravages of Aids, it's another thing to see them first hand," Bush said at a brief speech at an HIV/Aids treatment centre on the shores of Lake Victoria shortly after arriving in Uganda on a four-hour visit.

Bush also praised Museveni for masterminding an effort which has turned back the tide of Aids in Uganda.

"This is such a land of hope in the heart of Africa," Bush said.

"Life by life, village by village, Uganda is showing that Aids can be defeated across Africa. However, the current efforts to oppose the disease are simply not equal to the need and America understands that."

He spoke hours after a key House of Representatives committee in Washington voted to limit spending on his signature five-year \$15bn Aids plan.

The committee said it would provide \$2bn in the plan's first year, rather than the \$3bn allowed by legislation.

Undeterred, Bush vowed : "Over the next five years, my country will spend \$15bn to fight Aids around the world."

He pledged to Africans, "You are not alone. America has decided to act."

"I believe God has called us into action. Our country has got a responsibility, we are a great nation, we are a wealthy nation, we have a responsibility to help a neighbour in need, a brother and sister in crisis."

Aids and Africa activists have accused Bush of devoting insufficient political muscle to forcing Congress to fully fund his anti-Aids plan.

Storybook

Meanwhile, US First Lady Laura Bush gave a few dozen Uganda school kids a taste of Americana when she read them a classic American children's book.

She took about a half-hour out of her four-hour visit to Uganda to read from "Clifford the Big Red Dog" to children - some HIV-positive.

"This is a very popular book in the United States, boys and girls love Clifford," she told the few dozen kids who gathered at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel for the reading.

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Bush In Africa



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