

U.N. AIDS envoy: Talk less, do more

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U.N. special envoy on AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis has urged delegates at an AIDS conference in Toronto to talk less and do more about the problem.

Lewis wrapped up the 16th annual International AIDS Conference -- where hundreds of studies were exchanged and thousands of numbers released -- with a call for activists to place a temporary moratorium on "the endless ... proliferation of meetings, round tables ... ad nauseum" and concentrate on tangible work, the Toronto Sun reported Saturday.

He asked delegates to enforce the conference theme -- "Time to deliver" -- and then issued a list of recommendations. His speech also touched on poverty, the epidemic of child orphans, sexual violence against children and gender inequality -- which he said was the driving force behind the AIDS pandemic.

Lewis said inaction by the major powers was tantamount to genocide, but he reserved his harshest criticism for South Africa, where between 600 and 800 people die daily of AIDS. He called the South African government "obtuse, dilatory and negligent" on AIDS treatment.

"The government has a lot to atone for," said Lewis. "I am of the opinion it will never achieve redemption."

The conference was one of Lewis' last acts as special envoy.

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