

Prince Harry and Elton John speak out at AIDS summit

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Britain's Prince Harry and Sir Elton John shared a stage in South Africa on Thursday, warning that complacency threatened efforts to defeat AIDS and urging young people to lead the fight.

Addressing about 1,000 delegates at the International Aids Conference in Durban, Prince Harry praised how far the struggle had come since his mother, the late Princess Diana, became a champion for those with the disease.

"When my mother held the hand of a man dying of AIDS... no one would have imagined that just over a quarter of a century later, treatment would exist that would see HIV-positive people live full, healthy, loving lives," he said.

But he warned the world faced "the risk of complacency" in tackling the pandemic that has claimed more than 30 million lives in 35 years.

"As people with HIV live longer, AIDS is a topic that has drifted from the headlines, and with that drift of attention we face a real drift of funding and of action," he said.

"It is time for a new generation of leaders to step forward."

Prince Harry, 29, who arrived in Durban after visiting his charity Sentebale that support AIDS orphans in neighbouring Lesotho, was joined by singer and long-time activist Sir Elton John.

John said it was the death of an HIV-positive American teenager in 1990 that helped him find his voice as an advocate and campaigner.

"The truth is that young people have always been the voice of change," he said.

Lamenting his age—the singer turns 70 next year—John joked: "I'll be perfectly honest with you, young people won't listen to me."

"If we want HIV programmes to work for [young people](#), we can't tell them what to do and what to think," he said.

"Don't let us older generation lecture you. Make us listen to you."

The 21st biennial international conference wraps up Friday after five days of sobering statistics and impassioned pleas for increased funding.

The star-studded event has seen celebrities like Charlize Theron and Queen Latifah campaign for greater access to treatment for people living with HIV.

Antiretroviral drugs have allowed many sufferers to survive, but there are some 36.7 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Of these, only 17 million are receiving treatment.

Despite great scientific strides since the cause of the virus was discovered in 1984, new infections have stagnated at about 2.5 million a year, and a cure is still a distant goal.

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