

South African AIDS Conference Introduction August 5, 2003

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Introduction

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MALE VOICE: Thank you very much, Saleem (misspelled?).

I would like to welcome you all. Before I introduce the first speaker it is very important to note that we need also a greater involvement for people living with HIV and AIDS in this conferences. So it is very important also to note that we, as a people living with HIV and AIDS, we need full participation in programs like this and also to ensure that our participation is fully based because of there is nobody who can say anything about us whereas we are still here. So from today we take this challenge and say nothing about us without us. Every day we see people talking and talking on behalf of us as if we can't talk for ourselves. So it is very important when I introduced our first speaker, Boynjuwim (misspelled?) Kuchera (misspelled?), a mother of a four-year-old girl whose life was saved by the program of mother-to-child transmission program, and she's currently working for Treatment Action Campaign as a literacy coordinator. This morning I will feel very honored to call upon to Boynjuwim (misspelled?) to the stage.

BOYNJUWIM KUCHERA: The TAC salutes this conference and delegates and fully understands the aims of the conference. Every day as people with AIDS we experience a constant and a continuous deliberate onslaught against African people. And today it is led by its own leaders when the government of South Africa, the government of popular vote, and the government I voted for is refusing to commit itself to the recognized

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treatment and prevention plan. There's over 200,000 people crying outside, pleading for treatment, to restore their lives and dignity. (Unintelligible) to commit itself to a national treatment and prevention plan that includes answer (unintelligible) in the public health system. We also asked the (unintelligible) council to act independently and with dignity when dealing with its mandate. As PWAs we are not doing this because we are being influenced by anyone. There is no one who can influence us about the - our rights as guaranteed in the constitution. No one can ever influence us to witness the death of people who die every day without treatment. There's no one who can influence us to have the opportunistic infections that cannot be too (unintelligible) in our public health system. But as Africans and PWAs we can also think for ourselves and for our lives. And I also urge the delegates to sign the postcards that are available at the (unintelligible) information table calling on our governments to provide antiretroviral treatment and to have a statement calling our government to speak up the neglect process. Thank you.

[END OF RECORDING]

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