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Bush Proposes New Spending to Assist Poor Africans

By [RICHARD W. STEVENSON](#)

WASHINGTON, June 30 - President Bush proposed initiatives on Thursday to help Africa, calling for increased spending to fight malaria, help more children attend school and ensure the rights of women.

The proposals were the latest in a series of steps by the White House to provide more aid to Africa, partly in response to pressure exerted by other world leaders, including Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain.

Mr. Blair has made addressing poverty and disease in Africa the main focus of a summit meeting of the world's major industrial nations in Scotland next week that Mr. Bush will attend. The White House has been scrambling to come up with plans so that the United States can be shown to be doing its share in the face of international criticism that it has been too stingy.

The president put the proposals in the context of broader imperatives for the United States, from the national security implications that stem from economic and political disorder in poor nations to the moral demand of helping the world's neediest people.

"We fight the war on terror with our power; we will win the war on terror with freedom and justice and hope," he said in announcing the new programs during a speech in Washington to an invited audience that included African diplomats at the Freer Gallery of Art. "We seek progress in Africa and throughout the developing world because conscience demands it."

Mr. Bush also made some of his strongest comments yet on the killing in the Darfur region of Sudan, as the government has tried to crush a rebel movement, saying the violence "is clearly genocide" and reiterating the support of the United States for African peacekeeping efforts there.

He outlined three new efforts to address some of Africa's worst problems. He said the United States would spend at least \$1.2 billion over the next five years in an effort to reduce by half the deaths from malaria in 15 African countries. More than a million people a year die of malaria each year, most of them children and most in sub-Saharan Africa.

He called for spending \$400 million over the next five years on a program to improve the quality and accessibility of education in Africa by training teachers, providing scholarships to girls, distributing textbooks and expanding job training.

The president also announced a \$55 million program, to be carried out over the next three years in four African nations, to help combat sexual violence against women and to address related issues of justice and health care.

The decision to propose a major new program to battle malaria amounted to a policy reversal by Mr. Bush, who five months ago sent Congress a budget request for next year that would have cut funds for antimalaria programs. The administration sought to cut financing for antimalaria programs administered by the United States to \$58 million from the \$90 million enacted by Congress for this year.

The House Appropriations Committee has already approved legislation keeping financing at \$90 million for next year, and the Senate is seeking an increase to \$105 million.

Before Thursday's announcement, the United States had already agreed to help wipe out the debts of some poor nations in Africa and elsewhere, and to double aid from last year's levels by 2010 by expanding existing programs to battle AIDS and encourage economic development in Africa.

Some advocacy groups that have been pressing the administration to do more praised Mr. Bush for moving in the right direction, even as they said they would continue to push for even more money.

"While the numbers aren't as bold as the words, we like his support for these heroic efforts," said Jamie Drummond, executive director of DATA, a group that has been pressing the administration to act aggressively to fight poverty and disease in Africa. "When the president puts his seal on an issue, it helps get more money for it, even if the president's numbers aren't that much."

Other experts said Mr. Bush had missed an opportunity to take bold action that would make a substantial difference in Africa.

"It's another step forward, but a very, very small and disappointing step in light of the hopes that something major would happen on education in Africa at this summit," said Gene Sperling, who headed the National Economic Council under President Clinton and is now director of the Center for Universal Education at the Council on Foreign Relations.

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