

# Thousands gather for Aids congress

## Pop concert is planned in fight against scourge

By MIKE MWANIKI and  
CALEB ATEMI in Barcelona

American pop music groups will perform at a multi-million dollar anti-Aids campaign concert in Kenya, a minister announced yesterday.

The concert, scheduled for October 8 at Nairobi's Jamhuri Park, is expected to attract more than 250,000 young people while another 10 to 15 million will watch the show on television and listen to it on radio.

Public Health Minister Sam Ongeri said in Barcelona that groups such as Boys II Men and Kool and the Gang have been enlisted in the concert aimed at helping to stem the spread of Aids.

Between \$400,000 and \$700,000 will be spent on local performances alone to target sexual behaviour change among Kenyans. Similar concerts will be held in Kampala and Dar es Salaam on October 5 and 12 respectively.

Prof Ongeri was speaking to journalists at the Hilton Barcelona Hotel. He is leading a government delegation to the 14th International Aids Conference. "A committee led by

*Treat aimed to help stem spread of virus*

the Nairobi provincial medical officer of health has been set up to plan the concert. We need both local and international

groups that will attract the youth. An American NGO is packaging the concept for us." He said religious leaders and the Ministry of Education would be involved in the planning and that a large audience had been targeted "even if it means declaring a public holiday so that school-going youths can attend". The target audience for the concert, using various forms of media in Africa, would be between 30 and 50 million people, Prof Ongeri said.

The musical concert is expected to help establish 100 more voluntary testing centres.

Prof Ongeri said the Aids and malaria vaccine trials in Kenya were successful and that his team would meet US Secretary of Health Tommy Thompson to discuss the \$700 million programme to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission in Africa.



Photo/Associated Press

Activists march in Barcelona demanding aid for the developing countries in their fight against Aids on the sidelines of the international Aids conference which began on Sunday.

## US firm raises hopes for vaccine

BARCELONA, Monday

A preventive vaccine against HIV/Aids could be available by 2005 if results from human safety and efficacy trials are as good as expected, a US biotechnology company said today.

Early results from Phase III trials of a preventive Aids vaccine will not be available until early next year but its California developer, VaxGen Inc, said it was

optimistic it would work. "I think we will get protection (from the virus) but I don't know what level we will get," Mr Donald Francis, the president and co-founder of the company, said.

Mr Francis admitted he did not have any early clues about the results but said the vaccine used a standard approach and it worked in chimpanzees, so he believed it would be effective in

humans. "We expect to see in humans what we have seen in animal studies," he said. "If all goes well it could be available by end of 2004 or early 2005."

Hopes for Aids vaccines have been dashed in the past and the charity ActionAid, which welcomed the news, advised a cautionary approach.

"This is potentially great news. But it is far too early to celebrate," said Mr Omo Igogho, the head of health programmes in Nigeria for ActionAid.

### Controlling the epidemic

With 40 million people living with HIV/Aids and infection rates rising, a preventive vaccine is considered the best hope to control the rampant epidemic.

Drugs have prolonged the lives of sufferers in the West but few in the developing world have access to them.

It is doubtful that the first preventive vaccine will be 100 per cent effective

against the virus, but experts believe even 30 per cent protection could help to curtail the epidemic. "Our target is 100 per cent but if we get 30 per cent I'll be thrilled," said Mr Francis.

VaxGen's Aids vaccine works by inducing the immune system to produce antibodies that attach to the gp120 protein on the surface of the virus. The theory is that by preventing the virus from attaching to the cells it will stop infection.

Mr Francis said VaxGen was committed to tiered pricing, which would make it affordable for poor countries, and is also beefing up its manufacturing capabilities to produce it in bulk quickly. The impact of the vaccine in protecting high-risk people from sexual transmission of HIV is being tested on 5,400 volunteers in the US, Canada, Puerto Rico and the Netherlands. (Reuters)

## Activists and delegates boo minister as meeting opens

By NATION Correspondents

The 14th International Aids Conference opened yesterday in the seaside city of Barcelona without much optimism.

Thousands of activists and some delegates booed and walked out as the Spanish Health minister Celia Villalobos rose to address the more than 15,000 participants gathered at the Palau Olympic San Jordi amphitheatre.

Spanish journalists said Ms Villalobos was unpopular due to her perceived negative attitude towards Aids victims and her ignorance in fighting the disease.

Several delegates also accused the Spanish Government of discrimination after it locked out hundreds of key speakers and people living with Aids from the conference.

Earlier, UNAids Executive Director Peter Piot, who was representing UN Secretary

General Kofi Annan, posed: *'Why are Aids victims still the targets of hate?'*

Why are only 30,000 Africans getting antiretroviral treatment, when a hundred times that number need it? Why are three quarters of a million babies born with HIV a year, when it is eminently preventable? Why have we failed to stop the dramatic expansion of HIV?"

On the world's political will in the fight against Aids, Dr Piot said: "The answers are about power and priorities. So let us be clear about ours," he said. "We did not come to Barcelona to renegotiate promises. We are here to ignite leadership, to keep promise. We must make an uncompromising attack on stigma that is not negotiable. We must strengthen that alliance that will deliver and HIV vaccine that is not negotiable. We must deliver both prevention and treatment at full scale that is not negotiable. We must find \$10 billion that is not negotiable."

### LAST OPPORTUNITY

To view the **amazing KITENGELA BUSHGLASS** exhibition at **RAMOMA gallery** in **Rahimtulla Towers** opposite the **British High Commission** on **Upperhill road**. Do not miss this truly original feast of art and glass by international and Kenyan artists.

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### NATION WEATHER

Tuesday, July 09 2002

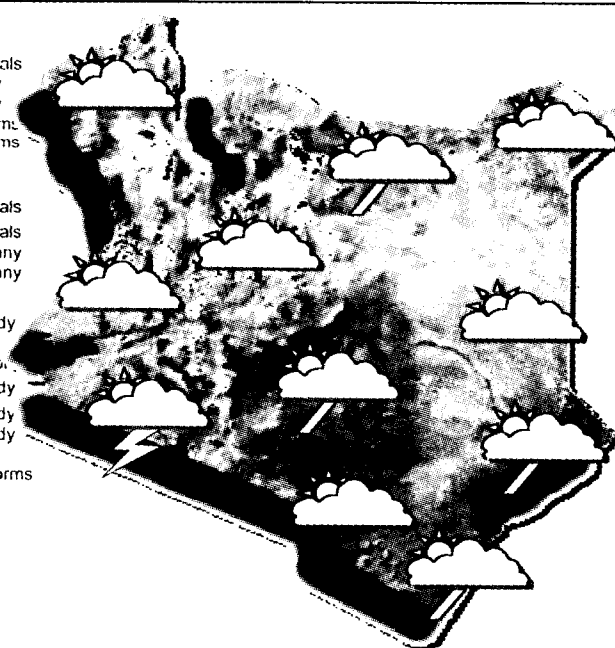
#### Further Outlook

The country to remain generally dry apart from the coastal region.

Kenya			
	Max	Min	Weather
Lodwar	34	23	Sunny intervals
Marsabit	23	13	Rains/Sunny
Mandera	34	24	Rains/Sunny
Eldoret	23	07	Thunderstorms
Kisumu	30	14	Thunderstorms
Nyeri	22	11	Cool/sunny
Nairobi	24	10	Cool/sunny
Makindu	29	14	Sunny intervals
Voi	29	19	Sunny intervals
Lamu	29	23	Showers/sunny
Mombasa	30	21	Showers/sunny

Africa			
	Max	Min	Weather
Cairo	26	23	Partly cloudy
Addis Ababa	21	12	Cloudy
Lagos	32	24	Thundersto.
Dakar	31	26	Partly cloudy
Khartoum	44	30	Partly cloudy
Kampala	25	16	Partly cloudy
Pretoria	19	03	Sunny
Dar es Salaam	31	21	Thunderstorms
Harare	21	11	Sunny

Europe			
	Max	Min	Weather
Vienna	25	13	Rains
London	21	15	Showers
Paris	23	12	Cloudy
Frankfurt	23	12	Rains
Athens	35	23	Sunny
Rome	29	16	Sunny
Oslo	19	10	Cloudy
Moscow	28	17	Sunny
Madrid	34	20	Sunny



SOURCE: Kenya Meteorological Department

#### America

	Max	Min	Weather
Vancouver	22	16	Thunderstorms
Miami	27	23	Thunderstorms
Washington	29	23	Partly cloudy
Los Angeles	19	17	Cloudy
Dallas	33	24	Partly cloudy
Chicago	32	23	Partly cloudy

#### Middle East

	Max	Min	Weather
Tel Aviv	32	22	Sunny
Riyadh	47	31	Sunny
Kuwait	47	32	Sunny
Dubai	38	28	Sunny

#### Asia

	Max	Min	Weather
Mumbai	32	25	Thunderstorms
Kuala Lumpur	32	24	Cloudy
Tokyo	25	22	Thunderstorms
Bangkok	33	26	Thunderstorms
Beijing	35	23	Sunny