

= Race Against Time : Searching for Hope in AIDS @-@ Ravaged Africa =

Race Against Time : Searching for Hope in AIDS @-@ Ravaged Africa is a non @-@ fiction book written by Stephen Lewis for the Massey Lectures . Lewis wrote it in early to mid @-@ 2005 and House of Anansi Press released it as the lecture series began in October 2005 . Each of the book 's chapters was delivered as one lecture in a different Canadian city , beginning in Vancouver on October 18 and ending in Toronto on October 28 . The speeches were aired on CBC Radio One between November 7 and 11 . The author and orator , Stephen Lewis , was at that time the United Nations Special Envoy for HIV / AIDS in Africa and former Canadian ambassador to the United Nations . Although he wrote the book and lectures in his role as a concerned Canadian citizen , his criticism of the United Nations (UN) , international organizations , and other diplomats , including naming specific people , was called undiplomatic and led several reviewers to speculate whether he would be removed from his UN position .

In the book and the lectures , Lewis argues that significant changes are required to meet the Millennium Development Goals in Africa by their 2015 deadline . Lewis explains the historical context of Africa since the 1980s , citing a succession of disastrous economic policies by international financial institutions that contributed to , rather than reduced , poverty . He connects the structural adjustment loans , with conditions of limited public spending on health and education infrastructure , to the uncontrolled spread of AIDS and subsequent food shortages as the disease infected much of the working @-@ age population . Lewis also addresses such issues as discrimination against women and primary education for children . To help alleviate problems , he ends with potential solutions which mainly require increased funding by G8 countries to levels beyond what they promise .

Book reviewers found the criticisms constructive and the writing sincere . His style focuses less on numbers and statistics , and more on connecting decisions by UN officials and western diplomats to consequences on the ground in Africa . His eyewitness accounts are said to be candid and emotional . The book spent seven weeks at # 1 on The Globe and Mail 's Nonfiction Bestseller List . A second edition was released in June 2006 . The Canadian Booksellers Association awarded its Libris Award for non @-@ fiction book of the year to Race Against Time and its Author of the Year Award to Lewis in 2006 .

= = Background = =

At the time of publication , the author , Stephen Lewis , aged 67 and living in Toronto , worked as the United Nations Special Envoy for HIV / AIDS in Africa , a position he held since 2001 . Previously he worked as the Deputy Director of United Nations Children 's Fund (1994 ? 99) , as the Canadian ambassador to the UN (1984 ? 88) , and as leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party (1970 ? 79) . After Lewis optimistically accepted the Special Envoy position he became increasingly distraught by the devastation he witnessed . Already a skilled orator , he became more vocal on the topic . He founded the Stephen Lewis Foundation , hosted Oprah Winfrey as she toured Africa , and was the subject of two award @-@ winning documentaries by The Nature of Things , entitled Race Against Time and The Value of Life . Meanwhile he was appointed as a Companion of the Order of Canada , awarded the Pearson Medal of Peace , and named Canadian of the Year (2003) by MacLean 's magazine . In 2005 , he was invited to deliver the annual series of Massey Lectures from which the book , Race Against Time , was adapted . He wrote the text in early to mid- 2005 and delivered the lecture series in October when the book was released . Lewis wrote the book , not as an employee of the UN , but as a citizen concerned with the world 's response to the AIDS challenge in Africa .

= = Content = =

The book consists of five chapters , from which the five lectures were derived : Context , Pandemic , Education , Women , and Solutions . Before these chapters are sections titled Preface and

Acknowledgments , and afterwards a Glossary section . The book 's second edition contains an Afterword section written in May 2006 . In the Preface , written by Lewis in August 2005 , he states that his preferred genre is the spoken word and that the nature of the topic would not allow him to comprehensively cover every aspect . He justifies his writing by proclaiming himself a devotee to the United Nations and outlines the roles he has held with the organization since 1984 . In the first chapter , Lewis tells anecdotes of visits to Africa and other UN @-@ related events like , in 1986 , brokering the resolutions from the General Assembly 's 13th Special Session . He acknowledges colonialism and Cold War ideologues as historical influences on the African situation , but focuses on the effects of international finance institutions ' conditional loans since the late 1980s .

In the second chapter Lewis discusses his history in Africa , beginning in the 1960s as an English teacher in Ghana . He contrasts Africa of the 1960s shedding colonial rule , optimistic in future prospects , with Africa of the 2000s struggling with AIDS and increasingly widespread hunger . He acknowledges the brain drain trend , noting " there are more Malawian doctors in Manchester [England] than in Malawi " . In the third chapter Lewis examines how the UN , World Bank , and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) failed to fulfill promises of free access to primary education . In the instances where school entry fees were eliminated , additional fees (e.g. fees for uniforms , books , exams , and registration) had the same effect of limiting access . The fourth chapter elaborates on how women 's issues are ignored or dismissed at international conferences and by African governments . Lewis identifies the gender discrimination that occurs even within the UN organization , whose management staff was dominated by males . He links the World Bank and IMF conditions of low social spending on education and healthcare by governments of recipient countries to the rampant spread of AIDS in those same countries . The disease decimated Africa 's working age and farming population , leading to famine . He calls on the international financial institutions to pay " reparations " in the form of debt relief .

Lewis concludes that dramatic changes are required to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 . In the final chapter , he considers some potential measures that could help in Africa . He laments the shortfalls in funding by G8 countries , despite the continued renewed promises for full funding of Millennium Development Goal implementation . His proposed measures include :

- the expansion of the Jubilee Coalition to include cancellation of agricultural subsidies ;
- the amalgamation of UN Development Fund for Women , the UN Division for the Advancement of Women , and relevant portions of United Nations Population Fund into one UN agency funded to a similar level as UNICEF ;
- maintenance of the momentum on the World Health Organization 's ' three by five ' (3 million people treated by 2005) program ;
- addressing revenue shortfall in The Global Fund to Fight AIDS , Tuberculosis and Malaria through donations from private @-@ sector organizations that profit from Africa (e.g. pharmaceutical companies) ;
- creating an agency that can provide emergency food aid in a much shorter timeframe than current programs ;
- supporting Jeffrey Sachs ' Millennium Village Project ;
- investing in vaccine and microbicide research ;
- eliminating school fees for primary education ;
- using microcredit money pots for women to care for orphans ;
- planning for capacity replacement on a country @-@ by @-@ country , sector @-@ by @-@ sector basis .

= = Style = =

The writing style reflects the author 's intent to use the text for a lecture series . The narration addresses the audience while guiding it through explanations of the issues and anecdotal illustrations . Lewis ' charismatic , eloquent , and energetic oration style is reflected in the writing . The tone has been described as loud and persuasive . One reviewer called it " vintage Lewis ? incisive criticism leavened with high @-@ blown rhetoric " . The book focuses more upon real @-@

world human experiences , rather than numbers and statistics , in discussing the effect of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and the world 's response . Lewis ' eyewitness accounts are candid and vivid . For example , he recounts tours of hospitals and schools as he explains the dire straits of national health and education sectors , and he describes meetings with diplomats and staff from the UN , World Bank , and IMF as he explains their effect on foreign aid policies . The book is written from an idealistic perspective and , despite the anger and underlying sense of guilt , Lewis remains optimistic . While he was a professional diplomat , his memoir style reflections on specific people , such as Michel Camdessus , Carol Bellamy , and Thabo Mbeki were called undiplomatic . Despite the book 's undiplomatic style , Lewis retained his post as a UN Special Envoy until the term completed in December 2006 .

= = Publication = =

The book was released on October 18 as Lewis began the Massey lecture series in Vancouver . The second lecture took place in Winnipeg on the 20th , followed by Montreal on the 22nd , Halifax on the 26th , and the final one in Toronto two days later . The series was recorded then aired on CBC Radio One 's Ideas between November 7 and 11 . At each event Lewis fielded questions from the audience and participated in book signings . The publisher , House of Anansi Press , was on the last year of its contract with CBC to publish the Massey Lecture series ; facing a competitive bid from Penguin Books , Anansi aggressively promoted *Race Against Time* , with Lewis giving interviews to local media and attending receptions . CBC promoted the events nationally . Following an initial printing of 25 ,000 copies of the book by Anansi , along with the audio CDs produced by CBC Audio , there was a second printing in June 2006 with a new Afterword section .

= = Reception = =

In the Canadian market , *Race Against Time* debuted at # 5 on The Globe and Mail 's Nonfiction Bestseller List on October 29 . It spent seven weeks at # 1 , and forty weeks in the top ten . Excerpts from the book were published in The Globe and Mail , The Montreal Gazette , and Alternatives Journal . At the Canadian Booksellers Association Libris Awards in June 2006 , the book won non-fiction book of the year and Lewis won the Author of the Year Award . The book was short-listed for the Pearson Writers ' Trust Prize and the Trillium Book Award .

The book was positively received by reviewers . The prose has been called magnificent , lucid , eloquent , and passionate . Lewis ' emotional appeal has been called remarkably candid , sincere , powerful , and moving . Connecting the diplomatic and policy level work of the UN and World Bank with specific effects on the ground in Africa , and describing the problem of orphans , were among the strengths of the book . Lewis ' criticisms are constructive and , since they come from such an ardent multilateralist employed by the United Nations , authoritative . One reviewer questioned several of Lewis ' potential solutions as contributing to the same system that consistently fails to address its flaws . The same reviewer identified as the book 's weakness its political slant , which ignores corrupt or inefficient African governments and the realities of asking corporations and western governments to take steps against their self-interest , like canceling agricultural subsidies in the case of governments and donating profits in the case of businesses . Several reviewers noted that the book could be used as an effective tool to educate about the HIV / AIDS crisis and the plight of the people of sub-Saharan Africa .

An article in The New York Times , in October 2005 , reported on the book 's criticism of South Africa 's government , singling out President Thabo Mbeki and Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang . Lewis claimed that the South African programs were half-hearted and confusing ; a spokesperson for the Health Ministry characterized Lewis as a biased and uninformed judge of South Africa 's situation , and countered that they are rapidly expanding treatment programs . In August 2006 , as a keynote speaker at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto , Lewis sustained his criticism , calling South Africa 's government " still obtuse , dilatory and negligent about rolling out treatment " .

