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## **S. Africa's Mbeki slammed over AIDS**

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**27 September, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **S. Africa's Mbeki slammed over AIDS**

**BNE:** The leader of South Africa's trade union movement has launched a blistering attack on President Thabo Mbeki and his government over the country's out-of-control HIV/AIDS pandemic. The union's secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi slammed Mr. Mbeki for a "failure of leadership" and "a betrayal of our people and our struggle" in stemming the HIV/AIDS tide. Mr. Vavi said that the causes of South Africa's epidemic could be traced to failures in public health policy. He also condemned the health minister for recommending AIDS sufferers eat spinach to combat the effects of the virus. Vavi fumed: "Any health ministry that presides over the spread of an epidemic like this one has much to answer for."

Six million of South Africa's 45 million people are infected with HIV, according to the health department. Mr. Mbeki has courted controversy for many years by inexplicably discounting a link between sexual activity and HIV/AIDS. This perplexed workers in the field of HIV/AIDS research and angered many South Africans, who accused Mr. Mbeki of gross negligence and of complicity in the avoidable deaths of millions. South Africa began to distribute anti-retroviral drugs - which reduce the effects of HIV - only last year, following years of mounting pressure by activists. Mr. Vava expressed his deep consternation over this failing, saying: "There is something very wrong when there is silence about the need to ensure that people have access to cheap anti-retrovirals."

## WARM-UPS

**1. HIV/AIDS AWARENESS:** Chart the history of your awareness of HIV/AIDS over the years on a piece of paper. Can you remember the first time you heard about it? What TV commercials stick in your mind? What events have increased your awareness? In pairs / groups, talk about your charted histories.

**2. EDUCATION:** Who told you about HIV/AIDS? Who should tell you about it? Talk with your partner(s) about what you have learned (or otherwise) from the following sources. How would you feel about receiving information from each source?

- Parents
- Teachers
- Older brother/sister
- Teachers
- Friends
- Government
- TV and newspapers
- Partners (boyfriends, girlfriends etc.)

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*South Africa / blisters / Thabo Mbeki / HIV/AIDS / leadership / betrayal / tides / public health policies / spinach / sexual activity / anti-retroviral drugs*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. AIDS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with AIDS. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. CONTRACTING HIV & AIDS:** In pairs / groups, discuss what you think the chances are of contracting HIV/AIDS in the following cases. Check the Internet to find the answers.

- Kissing
- Unprotected sex
- Blood transfusions
- Shaking hands
- Swimming pools
- Having a tattoo
- Being bitten by a mosquito
- Oral sex

**6. HIV/AIDS OPINIONS:** How far do you agree with these opinions on HIV/AIDS? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. HIV/AIDS is something that other people get. It's not my problem.
- b. HIV/AIDS is a Third World problem.
- c. Governments are doing their best to find a cure for HIV/AIDS.
- d. There is more than enough information to educate people about HIV/AIDS.
- e. Rich countries don't care that some countries have 25 percent infection rates.
- f. Contracting HIV should be made a criminal offense.
- g. HIV/AIDS is the most serious problem in the world today.
- h. HIV/AIDS is a taboo subject.

## **BEFORE READING / LISTENING**

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. South Africa's leader has been criticized for his policy on AIDS. T / F
- b. HIV/AIDS is not such a problem in South Africa. T / F
- c. Mr. Mbeki has been successful in combating the AIDS problem. T / F
- d. South Africa's health minister advised HIV sufferers to eat spinach. T / F
- e. Five percent of South Africans have HIV. T / F
- f. Mr. Mbeki has discounted any link between HIV and sexual activity. T / F
- g. South Africa has for many years distributed anti-retroviral drugs. T / F
- h. Most South Africans do not have access to cheap anti-retroviral drugs. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. blistering    | flood         |
| b. stemming      | dismay        |
| c. tide          | attracted     |
| d. condemned     | unaccountably |
| e. presides      | stinging      |
| f. courted       | mystified     |
| g. inexplicably  | governs       |
| h. perplexed     | increasing    |
| i. mounting      | preventing    |
| j. consternation | castigated    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. launched a blistering         | over the spread of an epidemic  |
| b. the country's out-of-control  | people and our struggle         |
| c. a betrayal of our             | pressure by activists           |
| d. stemming the HIV/AIDS         | controversy for many years      |
| e. health ministry that presides | negligence                      |
| f. Mr. Mbeki has courted         | tide                            |
| g. discounting a link between    | attack on President Thabo Mbeki |
| h. accused Mr. Mbeki of gross    | consternation over this failing |
| i. following years of mounting   | sexual activity and HIV/AIDS    |
| j. expressed his deep            | HIV/AIDS pandemic               |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### S. Africa's Mbeki slammed over AIDS

**BNE:** The leader of South Africa's trade union movement has launched a \_\_\_\_\_ attack on President Thabo Mbeki and his government over the country's out-of-control HIV/AIDS \_\_\_\_\_. The union's secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi slammed Mr. Mbeki for a "failure of leadership" and "a \_\_\_\_\_ of our people and our \_\_\_\_\_" in stemming the HIV/AIDS tide. Mr. Vavi said that the causes of South Africa's epidemic could be \_\_\_\_\_ to failures in public health policy. He also condemned the health minister for recommending AIDS sufferers eat spinach to \_\_\_\_\_ the effects of the virus. Vavi \_\_\_\_\_: "Any health ministry that presides over the spread of an epidemic like this one has \_\_\_\_\_ to answer for."

Six million of South Africa's 45 million people are \_\_\_\_\_ with HIV, according to the health department. Mr. Mbeki has courted controversy for many years by inexplicably \_\_\_\_\_ a link between sexual activity and HIV/AIDS. This perplexed workers in the \_\_\_\_\_ of HIV/AIDS research and angered many South Africans, who accused Mr. Mbeki of \_\_\_\_\_ negligence and of \_\_\_\_\_ in the avoidable deaths of millions. South Africa began to \_\_\_\_\_ anti-retroviral drugs - which reduce the effects of HIV - only last year, following years of mounting \_\_\_\_\_ by activists. Mr. Viva expressed his deep consternation over this failing, saying: "There is something very wrong when there is \_\_\_\_\_ about the need to ensure that people have access to cheap anti-retrovirals."

*traced*  
*betrayal*  
*much*  
*blistering*  
*struggle*  
*fumed*  
*combat*  
*pandemic*  
*complicity*  
*silence*  
*discounting*  
*gross*  
*infected*  
*distribute*  
*pressure*  
*field*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'trade'** and **'union'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "HIV/AIDS" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about HIV/AIDS.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| • launched | • according   |
| • failure  | • discounting |
| • tide     | • field       |
| • traced   | • gross       |
| • combat   | • mounting    |
| • much     | • wrong       |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?
- d. Do you often read news articles on HIV/AIDS?
- e. What do the abbreviations "HIV" and "AIDS" stand for?
- f. What do you know about the plight of HIV/AIDS sufferers in South Africa and the rest of Africa?
- g. What do you think of Thabo Mbeki's opinion that sexual activity and HIV are not related?
- h. Where else in the world is AIDS a serious problem?
- i. How serious a problem is AIDS in your country?
- j. Should President Mbeki resign?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you surprised at anything you read in the article?
- d. What would governments in developed countries do if twenty percent of their populations were HIV positive?
- e. Has the world failed countries that have HIV/AIDS epidemics?
- f. Do you think AIDS will ever disappear?
- g. How would you feel about Thabo Mbeki if you were South African?
- h. How did you find out about the threat of HIV/AIDS?
- i. Have you ever had... / Would you ever have... a test for HIV/AIDS?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**HIV & AIDS PREVENTION:** In pairs / groups, talk about the following proposed solutions to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Would they be effective? Would they be acceptable and accepted in your country? Write your own idea at the bottom.

PROPOSALS	EFFECTIVE?	ACCEPTABLE?
Regular compulsory testing and the carrying of "I'm HIV/AIDS-free" ID cards for all 16-40-year-olds.		
The government makes condoms freely and widely available.		
HIV/AIDS education classes held in schools, universities and workplaces.		
A government campaign to encourage people not to have sexual relations until after they are married.		
A regular blitz of TV commercials aimed to shock people into HIV/AIDS awareness.		
Making the contraction of HIV/AIDS a criminal offense that carries a 15-year prison term.		
Your idea		

Change partners and tell each other the ideas you talked about.

Discuss which three ideas should be adopted and how they might be made more acceptable.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **S. Africa's Mbeki slammed over AIDS**

**BNE:** The leader of South Africa's \_\_\_\_\_ movement has launched a \_\_\_\_\_ attack on President Thabo Mbeki and his government over the country's out-of-control HIV/AIDS pandemic. The union's secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi slammed Mr. Mbeki for a "failure of leadership" and "a \_\_\_\_\_ of our people and our struggle" in \_\_\_\_\_ the HIV/AIDS tide. Mr. Vavi said that the causes of South Africa's epidemic could be \_\_\_\_\_ failures in public health policy. He also condemned the health minister for recommending AIDS sufferers eat spinach to combat \_\_\_\_\_ the virus. Vavi fumed: "Any health ministry that presides over the spread of an epidemic like this one \_\_\_\_\_ answer for."

Six million of South Africa's 45 million people are \_\_\_\_\_ with HIV, according to the health department. Mr. Mbeki has \_\_\_\_\_ controversy for many years by inexplicably discounting a link between sexual activity and HIV/AIDS. This \_\_\_\_\_ workers in the field of HIV/AIDS research and angered many South Africans, who accused Mr. Mbeki of \_\_\_\_\_ negligence and of complicity in the avoidable deaths of millions. South Africa began to \_\_\_\_\_ anti-retroviral drugs - which reduce the effects of HIV - only last year, following years of \_\_\_\_\_ pressure by activists. Mr. Vavi expressed his deep consternation over this failing, saying: "There is something very wrong when there is silence about the need \_\_\_\_\_ that people have access to cheap anti-retrovirals."

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on South African President Thabo Mbeki. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. HIV/AIDS AWARENESS:** Make a poster that increases people's awareness of HIV/AIDS. Include steps people can take to prevent contracting the virus. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to South African President Thabo Mbeki about his policy towards HIV/AIDS and anti-retroviral drugs. Make suggestions for how he might remedy the situation. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. blistering    | stinging      |
| b. stemming      | preventing    |
| c. tide          | flood         |
| d. condemned     | castigated    |
| e. presides      | governs       |
| f. courted       | attracted     |
| g. inexplicably  | unaccountably |
| h. perplexed     | mystified     |
| i. mounting      | increasing    |
| j. consternation | dismay        |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. launched a blistering         | attack on President Thabo Mbeki |
| b. the country's out-of-control  | HIV/AIDS pandemic               |
| c. a betrayal of our             | people and our struggle         |
| d. stemming the HIV/AIDS         | tide                            |
| e. health ministry that presides | over the spread of an epidemic  |
| f. Mr. Mbeki has courted         | controversy for many years      |
| g. discounting a link between    | sexual activity and HIV/AIDS    |
| h. accused Mr. Mbeki of gross    | negligence                      |
| i. following years of mounting   | pressure by activists           |
| j. expressed his deep            | consternation over this failing |

### GAP FILL:

#### S. Africa's Mbeki slammed over AIDS

**BNE:** The leader of South Africa's trade union movement has launched a **blistering** attack on President Thabo Mbeki and his government over the country's out-of-control HIV/AIDS **pandemic**. The union's secretary general Zwelinzima Vavi slammed Mr. Mbeki for a "failure of leadership" and "a **betrayal** of our people and our **struggle**" in stemming the HIV/AIDS tide. Mr. Vavi said that the causes of South Africa's epidemic could be **traced** to failures in public health policy. He also condemned the health minister for recommending AIDS sufferers eat spinach to **combat** the effects of the virus. Vavi **fumed**: "Any health ministry that presides over the spread of an epidemic like this one has **much** to answer for."

Six million of South Africa's 45 million people are **infected** with HIV, according to the health department. Mr. Mbeki has courted controversy for many years by inexplicably **discounting** a link between sexual activity and HIV/AIDS. This perplexed workers in the **field** of HIV/AIDS research and angered many South Africans, who accused Mr. Mbeki of **gross** negligence and of **complicity** in the avoidable deaths of millions. South Africa began to **distribute** anti-retroviral drugs - which reduce the effects of HIV - only last year, following years of mounting **pressure** by activists. Mr. Vavi expressed his deep consternation over this failing, saying: "There is something very wrong when there is **silence** about the need to ensure that people have access to cheap anti-retrovirals."