

A close-up, profile view of Kofi A. Annan, looking slightly downwards and to the left. He has short, graying hair and a goatee. He is wearing a dark blue pinstriped suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a red tie with a small pattern. The background is dark and out of focus, with some greenish light spots.

KOFI A. ANNAN

United Nations Secretary-General (1997-2006)

Ten years ago in 2001, HIV/AIDS had been around for 20 years. 28.6 million people were infected with the virus, and many millions more had lost their lives.

It was then that I called on the world's businesses to join together in the global fight against the virus. The Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS was formed, uniting the corporate sector, governments, and civil society in one common cause. MTV was one of the businesses at the forefront of the coalition, using its global network of channels to disseminate cutting-edge, entertaining, and innovative HIV messaging to young people worldwide. Under Bill's leadership, HIV prevention and education was an integral part of MTV programming, and he was asked to serve as a Special Ambassador for UNAIDS in 1998.

As HIV statistics rose and fell in different countries and demographics over the years, young people accounted for over half of new infections almost every time, and still do today. In recognition of the media's powerful role in reaching this affected group, the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) was established in 2005 to galvanise media organisations to play an even stronger role in prevention and education.

Bill was the first person I thought of to chair the leadership committee of this crucial initiative. His passion and dedication to the fight against HIV, particularly among the world's young people, made him the perfect leader and pioneer for the GMAI. Under Bill's chairmanship, it grew to include 140 companies from 70 countries.

As we approach the 30th year of AIDS, I cannot praise Bill enough for his continued dedication to the cause. Through the Staying Alive Campaign, countless young people are educated and informed through a medium that they trust and believe in. Further still, MTV has reached thousands of young people through the Staying Alive Foundation, ensuring that HIV prevention is tackled at a tangible, grass roots level in the local communities where it really matters.

It is an honour for me to lead our tribute to Bill today. I know there are many people from across the world that will have words of praise and admiration for Bill's incredible achievements throughout his 22 years at MTV.

Thank you Bill for your tireless activism in the global fight against HIV/AIDS, and many congratulations on a long and successful career at MTV Networks International.



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