

INTERNATIONAL

Mandela urges more donations to fight AIDS

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) - Democracy icon Nelson Mandela called on governments, businesses and citizens Thursday to donate generously to the war on AIDS, saying "no amount is too small," as the United Nations blamed the epidemic for declining life expectancy in parts of Africa.

Mandela's fervent appeal at the 15th International AIDS Conference followed announcements by the European Union and Bill Gates' foundation of contributions totaling \$102 million to a U.N.-sponsored global fund to fight the epidemic.

The former South African president, who survived tuberculosis in prison during his country's apartheid era, also called for increased efforts to control TB. The lung disease can be treated for as little as \$10 per patient but still is the leading killer of people with the human immunodeficiency virus that causes AIDS.

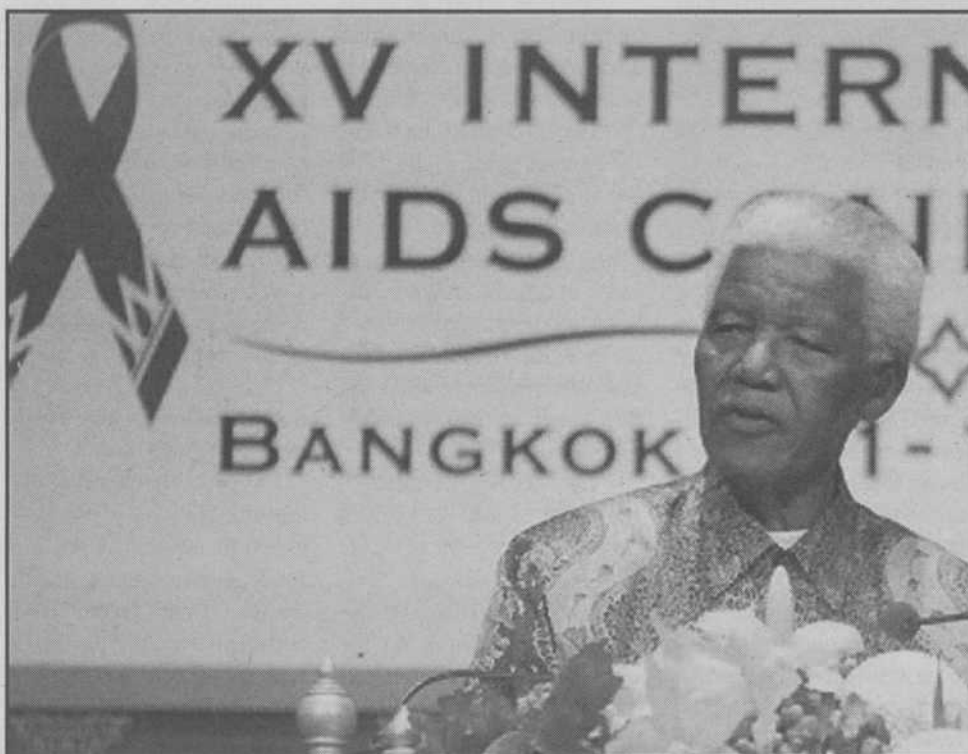
As the six-day conference wound down ahead of its closing ceremony Friday, protests continued against President Bush's funding policies and his emphasis on abstinence over condoms as a primary defense against HIV transmission.

"Bush is a jerk. Condoms work," about 20 youth protesters shouted as they briefly took over a U.S. government booth at the conference, distributing literature promoting condom use.

Much of Bush's foreign policy on AIDS is tied to abstinence programs. Critics say a vow of abstinence is difficult to maintain and, when broken, can lead to unprotected sex, raising the risk of HIV infection that could effectively be blocked by a condom.

Thursday was the last day of scientific presentations, with experts calling for urgent work on HIV killing gels that could help protect women who can't rely on condoms. The gels, known as microbicides, and other prevention methods like female condoms have gained importance as it has become clear an AIDS vaccine is still a long way off.

The vaginal gels could be applied long before intercourse and without a partner's knowledge. Dr. Zeda Rosenberg urged that \$1 billion be poured into research



Former South African president Nelson Mandela delivers a speech during the closing ceremony of the 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.

on such products over the next five years.

"The science is there. The technology is there, and most of all, the passion and dedication of those in the field is palpable," she said.

More than 38 million

people are infected with HIV worldwide, about 25 million of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Some 3 million people died of AIDS last year and only about 440,000 in the developing world are receiving treatment.

The United Nations Development Program reported that life expectancy for citizens of eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa — Angola, Central African Republic, Lesotho, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Zambia

and Zimbabwe — has fallen since 1990 to 40 years or less, due largely to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The decrease is by as much as 20 years in some countries.

"The AIDS crisis cripples states at all levels, because the disease attacks people in their most productive years," said Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the U.N. program. AIDS "tears apart the foundations of everything from public administration and health care to family structures."

The conference, held every two years, is the biggest ever assembly of AIDS scientists, activists, policy-makers and HIV-infected people, and has also drawn international dignitaries like Indian Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi and Mandela.

"Donors need to substantially increase their funding. This applies not only to governments, but also the private sector and private foundations," said Mandela, who turns 86 on Sunday.

"It also applies to every

global citizen — no amount of money is too small to make a difference," he said.

Earlier, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced that it would contribute an additional \$50 million to the U.N.-sponsored Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Set up 30 months ago, the fund faces a major funding gap.

Donors have committed a total of \$3.4 billion through 2004, enough to meet its needs through the end of the year, but pledges for 2005 through 2008 are just \$2 billion, far below the \$3.6 billion that the Fund projects it will need in 2005 alone.

The European Union's head office said Thursday it is delivering another \$52 million to the fund as part of a \$569 million pledge for 2002-2006.

The EU is the second-largest contributor to the fund after the United States, which has given about \$580 million so far. Bush has proposed giving another \$200 million for 2005.

Kofi Annan urges Sudan to disarm militias

UNITED NATION (AP) - U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged Sudan on Wednesday to take immediate action to disarm Arab-backed militias and warned that the international community may step in if it doesn't move quickly.

Annan and his special representative in Khartoum, Jan Pronk, made clear they want a speedy restoration of security in the vast region where a 15-month conflict has killed up to 30,000 people, forced over a million to flee their homes, and left 2.2 million needing food and medicine. But neither set a deadline.

"The urgency is there, and the Sudanese government doesn't have forever," Annan told a news conference after Pronk briefed the U.N. Security Council on Darfur.

The rebels promised Annan in a July 3 agreement that they would crack down on the Janjaweed militia and other outlawed rebel groups, but Pronk said the government has made "no progress whatsoever" in honoring its pledge.

Annan said the Sudanese government should deploy the 6,000 police to Darfur called for in the agreement and protect people, "many of



United Nations Special Representative for Sudan, Jan Pronk, left, addresses reporters after being introduced by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan at United Nations headquarters in New York, on Wednesday.

South African churches rue Zimbabwe abuse

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) - The South African Council of Churches condemned violence and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe on Wednesday, and a top council leader said it was time other countries consider imposing sanctions.

Saying South Africa's policy of quiet diplomacy had failed, the council urged more effort in pressing Zimbabwe to end a crackdown on dissent amid an escalating economic and political crisis there.

"The people of Zimbabwe already are suffering. Perhaps under sanctions they would

suffer for a shorter period of time," said Cardinal Wilfred Napier, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Durban, in a radio interview on the independent station 702.

Zimbabwe has been wracked by political violence and economic turmoil in recent years as President Robert Mugabe's government seizes thousands of White-owned farms for redistribution to Blacks.

Critics say that African leaders - like South African President Thabo Mbeki - have largely kept silent about Mugabe's alleged abuses. Human rights groups and Western nations have con-

demned Mugabe's allegedly rigged re-election in 2002 and the ensuing crackdown on the opposition.

whom are living in sub-human conditions." Pronk said a body set up with Sudan to monitor implementation of the July 3 accord is sending a joint mission to Darfur for three days early next week to assess what's happening with the Janjaweed, and what's happening with the relocation or return of those who fled the fighting. The mission will include U.N. representatives, government officials and some ambassadors, he said.

The United States is pressing for Security Council action, and Pronk said he wants members to back the agreement and "to give teeth" to the implementation body.

U.S. Ambassador John Danforth said Washington has put the finishing touches on a revised draft resolution, which will be discussed Thursday by council experts. The initial draft called for an arms embargo and travel ban on the Janjaweed and would (See Sudan, Page 15)

The Council decries the tragedy of Zimbabwe, which has resulted in pain, suffering and dislocation for many people in Zimbabwe, as well as the erosion of human rights, the decline of the economy and the destruction of much of the natural heritage," the council said in a statement.

The Rev. Molefe Tsele, the council's secretary-general, told a news briefing that the council wants to discuss the situation in Zimbabwe with Mbeki as soon as possible.

Many have criticized Mbeki for failing to pressure Mugabe to restore the rule of law.

Mbeki has said he favors "quiet diplomacy," and that Zimbabwe's governing party and opposition were in private talks. He predicted last year the crisis would be resolved by June 30.

"Quiet diplomacy has failed," said Tsele. Instead, Mugabe has ruled out talks with Zimbabwe's opposition while the government has stepped up a violent crackdown on all forms of dissent, arresting opposition leaders, trade unionists and independent journalists.