

Actor Glover blasts U.S. for ignoring landmine accord

GENEVA (AP) — US actor Danny Glover blasted his country for failing to sign a pact to eliminate landmines after he visited child victims of landmines in Ethiopia, the latest nation to ratify the 1997 Ottawa Convention.

At the same time Glover, a vocal activist on child issues and a newly appointed Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pledged to do everything in his power to help children affected by war.

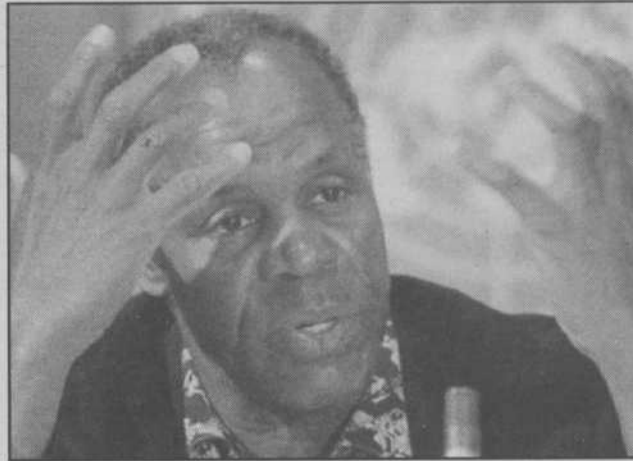
"After talking to children I feel a sense of embarrassment and anger that my own country has not signed the landmine treaty," said Glover, who is probably best known for his role as Sergeant Roger Murtaugh in the "Lethal Weapon" series.

"I think the US abandonment of the Ottawa Convention sends a bad message to the rest of the world," he told a reporters in Geneva, where the 57-year-old is spending the night en route back to the United States after his Ethiopia trip.

The comments came as Ethiopia itself handed over documents ratifying the convention to a landmine summit in Nairobi, becoming the 144th nation to accept the ban and elimination of the lethal contraptions.

Some one million landmines litter the country following years of internal conflict and fighting with neighbouring Eritrea and Somalia, said Glover.

A program is underway in Ethiopia to make the place



Actor and UNICEF goodwill ambassador, Danny Glover, answers a question at his news conference in Geneva, Switzerland last month after his first trip to Ethiopia for the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).

safer, with teams of people physically clearing landmines and others visiting schools to raise awareness among the young about the dangers of landmines, how

to spot one and what to do, said the actor, who witnessed the scheme during his trip.

"It was quite emotional," said Glover, describing the children he met during the

visit who had lost limbs or eyesight after stepping on a landmine.

"Eight-five percent of children hit by landmines do not survive," he noted.

Glover's trip to Ethiopia, which was only brief as he has to start making a film in the United States at the end of the week, was his first mission as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador but he plans to throw himself into the new role.

"I am often just thrown back by what I see happen to children which is often the antithesis of what should be happening to them," he said.

"All I know I can do in all my honesty and humility is just to be there in some way and do whatever I can if it means raising money where I

can or awareness where I can," pledged the grave-faced actor.

Before turning to the silver screen, Glover worked in community development in San Francisco.

UNICEF has recruited a high-profile cast of actors to help raise awareness on children's issues, including Audrey Hepburn, Danny Kaye, Mia Farrow and Jessica Lange.

Glover's trip to Ethiopia was timed to coincide with a week-long conference in Nairobi that has gathered delegates from 140 countries to assess progress made in implementing the pact to eliminate landmines, which kill or maim more than 40 people around the world every day.

Overcoming trials—Dance Theatre of Harlem reopens

By Zita Allen

Special to Sentinel-Voice

New York (NNPA) — After six long weeks of having its doors closed, the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) school reopened on Saturday, December 4.

Exuding excitement over what he called "the miracle on 152nd Street," Arthur Mitchell, the school's founder and artistic director, said the re-opening was made

possible by the tremendous outpouring of support from all over the world and an emergency fundraising campaign that yielded more than \$1.6 million from government, foundation, corporate and individual sources.

The groundswell of support began almost the minute the school's doors closed on October 16.

"This truly was a story of the community coming to the

aid of Dance Theatre of Harlem," Mitchell said at a press conference. "One e-mail urged people to send just \$1, another asked people to send all the small change in their purses and wallets. A congregation in San Francisco took up a collection and sent us a check. The community response has been so tremendous," Mitchell added.

The parents of DTH students also played a major part in helping to bring the school back, forming a support committee that will continue even after the school re-opens. And, of course, there were the students who couldn't wait to get back to class. On the day of the press conference, 20 of them lined up at the ballet barre for a brief demonstration.

"Some of them even told their parents that they didn't want to study anywhere else," Mitchell said, smiling.

Mitchell also expressed gratitude for the support from government, foundation and corporate sources. In announcing the school's re-opening, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said: "The Dance Theatre of Harlem holds an important place in this community, in the cultural landscape of our city, and in the entire dance world."

Bloomberg noted that now with the seed money and a "re-energized board and re-structured management, the Dance Theatre of Harlem is poised to resume its place as an outstanding institution that represents the best of New York City."

The restructuring includes the election of six new mem-

bers to DTH's Board of Directors and the naming of Laveen Naidu as the Executive Director.

At the announcement in Harlem, the Mayor and Arthur Mitchell were also joined by Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, Deputy Mayor Patricia Harris, Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate Levin, Executive Director Laveen Naidu, members of the Board of Directors and DTH students.

"The progress we have made over the past two months has been miraculous," said Mitchell. "I am deeply grateful to the funders who have shown confidence in our mission and our future and to the dedicated staff, parents and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to allow us to reach this historic moment."

A strategic plan was put into place which calls for the re-organization of the staff structure and the gradual in-

auguration of expanded education and outreach programming, a cash reserve, a new works fund and an annual New York Season.

The plan was accepted by the DTH Board of Directors at a meeting last week. The Board also approved the hiring of Naidu as the school's executive director.

Naidu had previously served as director of the DTH School.

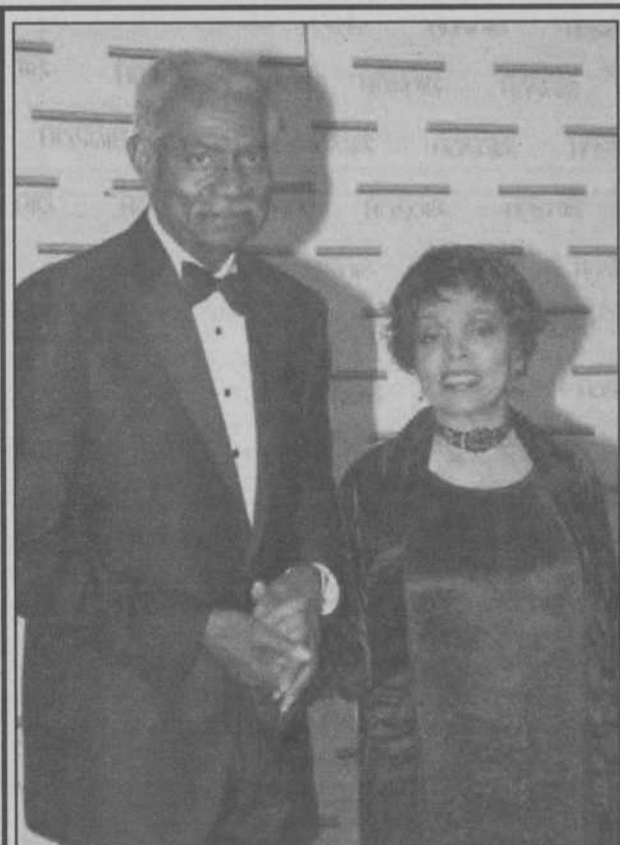
"It is an honor to be asked to lead the administration of this national treasure," said Naidu. "Mr. Mitchell's vision continues to inspire all of us who have dedicated our careers to Dance Theatre of Harlem."

Six new members have also been elected to the Board of Directors: Reverend Calvin O. Butts III, Pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church and president of SUNY College at Old Westbury; Nancy Aronson, Vice President of the Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foun-

ation and former DTH Board Member; Alison Sherman, a former Chairman of the DTH Board; Edith Everett, who together with her late husband Henry Everett's major gift, fostered the expansion of the DTH facility, which was renamed The Everett Center for the Performing Arts in 1993; Elizabeth Brooks from Detroit, Michigan, who has been instrumental in securing the DTH Company and Dancing Through Barriers (Education and Community Outreach) presence in Detroit; and Sylvia Lindsey, a longtime friend and patron of DTH.

Over the past six weeks, the school's leadership has been working closely with Michael M. Kaiser, president of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., to develop the plan to revitalize DTH. They spearheaded a substantial fundraising effort which yielded a total of more than

(See Harlem, Page 8)



FIRST COUPLE OF ART

Husband-and-wife actors, writers and producers Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee arrive at the State Department for a dinner celebrating them and the other Kennedy Center honorees, in Washington on Saturday. Recipients to be honored at the 27th annual national celebration of the arts are actor, producer, writer and director Warren Beatty; Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee; singer and composer Elton John; soprano Joan Sutherland; and composer and conductor John Williams.

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