

Mandela, musicians call for AIDS activism

TROMSOE, Norway (AP) - Nelson Mandela and international music stars pressed the world's richest nations to save lives with increased action against AIDS and poverty at a benefit concert under the midnight sun on Saturday in Tromsø, the main city of Norway's Arctic.

"We urge them to save the lives of our children. Let every child be a healthy child," Mandela told the cheering crowd of almost 18,000. "We know what to do and how much it will cost. We now need leadership, vision and political courage."

The 46664 Arctic Concert, named for Mandela's prisoner number during his 27 years in South African detention, is part of a series of AIDS charity concerts and has drawn such stars as Peter Gabriel, Annie Lennox, Robert Plant, Brian May, Angelique Kidjo and the group Razorlight.

Since stepping down as South African president in 1999, Mandela, whose own son died of an AIDS-related illness in January, has campaigned to raise awareness about AIDS, especially in Africa where about 25 million of the world's 40 million HIV-infected people live.

"Many years ago, I said that my long walk has not yet ended," Mandela said. "As we stand here tonight, I gain great comfort in the knowledge that we are not alone on this journey."

Even before the concert began, Tromsø, a city of 62,000 people roughly 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of the Arctic Circle, was in a festive mood, and by mid-afternoon, thousands of people stretched in a more than 1.5-kilometer (1-mile) - long line, waiting to enter the makeshift concert site on a nearby island.

Mandela's message was meant for the leaders of the G8 group of industrialized nations, who will meet in a summit next month to discuss a British proposal for increased aid to Africa. The plea came on the same day that the G8 finance ministers agreed on a historic deal to cancel US\$40 billion (euro33 billion) of debt owed by the world's poorest nations.

"They will face perhaps the most critical question that our world has had to face: How do we remove the face of poverty from our world?" Mandela said. "So much of our future will depend on the actions and the plans of these leaders." He pointed out that the world spends more on weapons than on treating

HIV/AIDS.

After his release from prison on Robben Island, Mandela shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo with South African President F.W. de Klerk for helping end apartheid.

In introducing Mandela at the concert, Peter Gabriel, who rose to fame with the group Genesis, said to cheers, "If the world only had one father, it would be him."

The 86-year-old Mandela, appearing frail, teamed up with more than 50 artists at the concert, where banners with his own image and his number flanked the stage. When he appeared on stage, waving his black baseball cap emblazoned 46664, all he could do was smile and wait for the wild cheering to subside.

At a brief news conference before the concern,

Kidjo, a singer from Benin, said it was Mandela who made AIDS a human rights issue and that "we can learn from his strength."

"Children are dying enormously in Africa and elsewhere from AIDS and other diseases," she said.

Lennox said she was honored to be part of an effort to counter such a terrible worldwide problem.

"This concerns every part

of our world," said Lennox, the lead singer of the 1980s band the Eurythmics. "Music is a huge, powerful, positive force that can bring people together," she said.

Despite Tromsø's being on the far northern fringe of Europe, every hotel in town was full, and the streets were packed with people enjoying round-the-clock sunshine after weeks of rain, and stunning scenery that includes

snowcapped mountains that seem to burst from the sea. Those attending included Norwegian Crown Princess Mette-Marit.

Mandela thanked the people of Tromsø, saying, "We have brought Africa to you... In sharing this burden with us in Africa, you bring us hope." Some 24 groups or artists were performing at the concert, lasting until after midnight.



“Location and the builder’s name meant everything to us. Our friends told us Pardee has a great reputation. Now we see why.”

Annie and Arthur Plata
Pardee homebuyers

Smart.

Every home shopper wants to make a smart decision, and a builder's reputation for quality and innovation is of utmost importance. That's why, for Arthur and Annie Plata, the critical question was whether other Pardee homebuyers were happy with Pardee. A smart question for these second-time homebuyers. After all, buying from a builder with 50-plus years of experience in Las Vegas makes a lot of sense. Choosing one that has also earned the stamp of approval from more than nine out of ten of its buyers may be pure genius.



THE WAY YOU WANT TO LIVE

 PardeeHomes.COM