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Black Entertainment Television (BET)

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Duff Gillespie

FROM: LPA

SUBJECT: Black Entertainment Television

DATE: November 9, 1999

Background

Since XXX, the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs has been holding a weekly meeting with staff from the Global Bureau's HIV/AIDS division to discuss what types of public events to plan for World AIDS Day, December 1. The meetings sought ways to highlight USAID's commitment and leadership in international HIV/AIDS work for a broader public, as well ways as to sensitize Washington (RRB) staff. . Alex has attended one of these meetings due to his contact with ONAP re the WAD event.

One result of these meetings is a proposal for the Administrator to announce a partnership with Black Entertainment Television on or prior to World AIDS Day. BET attended the First Lady's summit on AIDS on September 7. At this meeting, CEO Bob Johnson of BET advocated mobilizing TV stations and advertisers in Africa to better involve mass media in the fight against AIDS.

As USAID began planning for World AIDS Day, LPA suggested that BET be contacted to follow-up on their strong expressions of interest at September's meeting. LPA followed up with a conversation with BET (Linda Moffat of LPA/Public Liaison is a friend/acquaintance of Mr. Johnson). LPA ascertained Mr. Johnson's interest, in principle, in the possibility of creating public service announcements for BET Africa to raise awareness of issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. It was agreed that USAID and BET should explore collaborating to accomplish shared goals.

Partnership

Details of a USAID-BET partnership still need to be worked out. At this point, BET has expressed enthusiasm at the concept, but there has not been a meeting where both organizations have sat down to discuss details. Among the possibilities that have been discussed within USAID are:

- Linking USAID's communications partners, in US and Africa, to produce public service announcements for BET Africa audience(s);
- Production of one-hour special to raise awareness in U.S. of HIV/AIDS problem in sub-

Saharan Africa;

- Assist BET to convene a meeting of African and American television and radio managers and BCC experts to jointly develop increased coverage of HIV/AIDS concerns.

USAID envisions the division of labor as follows:

USAID

- Provide technical expertise on content and process for BCC activities;
- Assisting BET in determining what African stakeholders they need to work with;
- Assisting BET in developing content for PSAs/specials;
- Liaise with other USG agencies (e.g. VOA, USIS) and partners (e.g. ONAP, MTV, JHU/PCS, AED, CDC, the Communications Initiative, African American leaders interested in HIV/AIDS, leadership of the Durban 2000 meeting).
- Propose African and US participants for a meeting of television managers and advertisers.

BET

- Provide technical expertise for production and distribution of TV programming.
- Provide opportunities for training and mentoring to African media experts and institutions involved in IEC.
- Co-produce and fund one or more PSA campaigns or media events (e.g. for or around the Durban 2000 conference, or in association with Africa Alive!)
- Convene (and pay for) meeting of African and American television managers and advertisers to discuss how to improve public health message communication. (This was specifically proposed by BET at September's White House meeting)

Announcement

LPA would like the Administrator to make an announcement with Bob Johnson, chief operating officer of BET, in the days leading up to World AIDS Day. The announcement could take place at the National Press Club, and would announce the partnership between BET and AID. In order to make that announcement, only general concepts would need to be agreed upon, details on how to implement them could be resolved as the process moves along.

Luncheon

BA Rudolph asked LPA to set up a luncheon next week between the Administrator and Bob Johnson to lock in commitment at the top of the two organizations. Tentative dates are November 19, 23 or 24th.