

Media Release

Human Rights Activist Stephen Lewis Spreads the Message of Social Responsibility

Former UN Envoy Speaks at the 5th Science Centre World Congress in Toronto

Toronto, Ontario—(June 17, 2008) In a moving keynote speech today, Stephen Lewis, former United Nations Ambassador and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS encouraged science centre leaders to continue using their programs and influence to motivate visitors to take action on global humanitarian crises.

“The social responsibility you bring to everything that you do, the sense of interactivity, helping those who visit understand how these technological and scientific forces mesh-- that is a real contribution to social responsibility and engagement of society,” said Stephen Lewis.

Mr. Lewis delivered the keynote presentation on the second day of the 5th Science Centre World Congress, hosted by the Ontario Science Centre, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

“The tradition that has evolved with Science Centre World Congresses is that we invite keynote speakers from outside our field,” said Ontario Science Centre CEO and Congress Chair, Lesley Lewis. “They are selected for their ability to inspire delegates, to challenge our thinking and to promote discussion both during the congress and following. Mr. Lewis is a perfect example of that inspiration.”

As a politician, diplomat and international envoy for humanitarian efforts, Mr. Lewis has dedicated himself to improving the human condition. The Stephen Lewis Foundation funds grass roots projects in Africa that help individuals, families and communities ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Social Responsibility and Science Centres was the theme of the second day of the congress, attended by over 400 science centre leaders from 51 countries.

The day's panel discussions included the topic of access to clean drinking water and how science centres from Singapore, Mexico City and Sudbury are educating the public about this precious resource. In “Working Together to Decide the Future of Our Planet” delegates from Pretoria, Amsterdam and Paris talked about the role of science centres in helping citizens orient themselves in today's world and contribute to society.

For daily podcasts, summaries of the keynotes and plenary sessions and more information on the 5SCWC schedule visit www.5SCWC.org.

The Ontario Science Centre is hosting the 5th Science Centre World Congress from June 15 to 19, 2008 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Themed *Science Centres as Agents of Change-Locally, Nationally and Internationally*, this is the first time the congress is being held in North America. This triennial international event brings together CEOs and senior decision makers from the world's leading science centres to discuss issues and opportunities in the field, and the central role science organizations play in increasing the public's engagement with science.

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