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Politics and Policy | PEPFAR Has Been 'Unbelievably Effective,' Bush Says During Visit to Ghana
 [Feb 21, 2008]

President Bush on Wednesday during a visit to Ghana said the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) has been "unbelievably effective," the *New York Times* reports (Stolberg, *New York Times*, 2/21). Bush and first lady Laura Bush are on a five-country tour of Africa in part to highlight programs funded by PEPFAR and the [President's Malaria Initiative](#) (*Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report*, 2/20).


During a news conference in Ghana, Bush "faced tough questioning from an African reporter" about the PEPFAR requirement that one-third of funds used for HIV prevention be spent on abstinence-only education, the *Times* reports. The reporter said the requirement is not realistic because "multiple sexual relationships or partner relationships is the reality" in African societies, "though it's not spoken of in public." "I monitor the results" of PEPFAR, Bush said, adding, "And if it looks like it's not working, then we'll change. But thus far I can report, at least to our citizens, that the program has been unbelievably effective. And we're going to stay at it" (*New York Times*, 2/21). Bush said he understands "customs and norms" but added that PEPFAR is a "comprehensive" program and that there is a third element to the strategy "called condoms" (Gerstenzang, *Los Angeles Times*, 2/21). Bush added, "All I'm interested in is results. I'm wise enough to set the strategy and change the tactics if they're not working."

Ghanaian President John Kufuor at the conference said Ghana is committed to reducing the spread of HIV "even as we agree to perhaps a bit of looseness in our ways." He added that he hopes PEPFAR funding "will be put to the best uses in terms of engaging the best scientific and technological means to tackle" HIV/AIDS ([AFP/Google.com](#), 2/20).



Bush on Wednesday also announced that the U.S. will commit \$350 million over five years for what he called "neglected tropical diseases," which include hookworm, river blindness and elephantiasis. According to the White House, the current budget for such programs is \$15 million (*Los Angeles Times*, 2/21).

Bush on Thursday is scheduled to visit Liberia -- the last nation on his tour -- where he is expected to meet with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *AFP/Khaleej Times* reports (*AFP/Khaleej Times*, 2/21).

 PRI's "[The World](#)" on Wednesday reported on an abstinence program at a school in Accra, Ghana. The segment includes comments from Sakyi Awuku Aboa, director-general of the [Ghana AIDS Commission](#), and students (Harvey, "The World," PRI, 2/20). Audio of the segment is available [online](#).

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