

AFRICAN GLOBAL HIP-HOP SUMMIT AND CONCERT

FOR YOUTH UNDER SIEGE

A "MESSENGERS OF TRUTH" PROJECT

OCTOBER 20TH - 23RD, 2005 - JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

1. MESSENGERS OF TRUTH PROJECT – BACKGROUND

Using of Hip-Hop as a communication tool, the UN-HABITAT, through the "*Messengers of Truth Project*", and in association with Native Rhythms Productions are planning the African Global Hip-Hop Summit and Concert for Youth under Siege, scheduled to take place on October 20th – 23rd, 2005 in South Africa.

The Hip-Hop Summit and Concert is a regional follow-up to the first Global Hip-Hop Summit and Concert held during the 2nd World Urban Forum in Barcelona in September 2004. It forms part of UN-Habitat and Hip-Hop Artist's ongoing efforts in mobilizing and supporting the youth groups to help inform and empower disenfranchised urban youth on the Millennium Development Goals and to help raise funding for youth development initiatives around the world.

The *Messenger of Truth Project* is the UN-Habitat initiative which specifically targets disenfranchised urban youth who constitute up to 60 percent of urban slum dwellers using Hip-Hop and other creative art forms as a communication tool. In many respects, these urban youth are the real victims of their poor living conditions; they have poor access to education, little or no prospects for meaningful jobs and are the most vulnerable in terms of crime, poor health and HIV/AIDS. Lessons learned from best practices around the world show, however, that they can be mobilised and their energies effectively channelled to improving their own living conditions and environment, through a variety of ways including skills training and entrepreneurship development and simple positive messages.

UN-HABITAT is the lead UN agency for housing and urban development and is task manager of two of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs): access to water and sanitation and improving the living conditions of people living in slum, especially the youth. Both these targets have a major impact on the other goals of reducing poverty and HIV/AIDS, empowering women, and promoting universal access to health care and education.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MESSENGERS OF TRUTH PROJECT

Through the use of Hip-Hop artists, appointed as Messengers of Truth, the UN-Habitat will seek to realise the following objectives:

- (a) Launch and implement the Messengers of Truth Project globally;
- (b) Reach out to and inform 300 million disenfranchised youth living in slums and inner cities around the world of the Millennium Development Goals by 2008;
- (c) Raise over US\$5 million in seed funding to empower urban youth to play an active role in improving living conditions in their respective communities;
- (d) Identify and support up to 50 youth development and empowerment initiatives around the world.

3. THE HIP-HOP SUMMIT AND CONCERT FOR YOUTH UNDER SIEGE

The Summit and Concert forms part of the UN-Habitat and Hip-Hop Artist's ongoing efforts in mobilizing and supporting youth groups to help inform and empower disenfranchised urban youth on the Millennium Development Goals. The summit will help raise awareness and funding needed in support of local youth development initiatives as it pertains to the following:

- reducing abject poverty and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS by half by 2015,
- promoting universal access and awareness to health and education,
- empowering the youth and creating young entrepreneurs
- improving the living conditions of at least 300 million slum dwellers by 2020

The Summit and Concert will feature committed artists from Africa, North and South America, Europe and Asia, and it is envisaged that more than 40, 000 people will attend the concert. The artists have been chosen based on their commercial success as well as their dedication to community/social upliftment and youth development projects and have been selected from the following regions:

▪ USA and Canada	=	3 artists
▪ East Africa	=	2 artists
▪ West Africa	=	2 artists
▪ Southern Africa	=	3 artists
▪ Rest of the World	=	3 artists
TOTAL NO. OF ARTISTS	=	13 ARTISTS

4. THE RATIONALE FOR USING HIP HOP AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

4.1. Hip-hop – a Tool for Economic Development

Hip-Hop has changed dramatically what was considered to be violent and intimidating form of music. Hip-hop music has become the mainstream or the default musical setting of the culture. As a result rap is now used to sell everything from fast food to cars, brand marketing and used to gain access to youth in danger. Hip-hop has gone beyond being just about music, but hip-hop has actually become a brand, a lifestyle and an urban culture that almost everybody aspires to be associate with – even big corporate.

It is on this note that inevitably the rapper is now more than a musician but has become an entrepreneur that utilizes his or her craft to sell global brands of big corporations. Rappers are trendsetters; where they lead others follow. They can revitalize a luxury brand by making it seem youthful and individualistic, as P Diddy's driving a Bentley even a very traditional company becomes cool.

Russell Simmons, founder of DefJam records, used his experience of marketing hip-hop to launch Phat Farm which by 2003 had sales in excess of \$260 million and was later sold for \$140 million. Russell's company, Simmons Lathan Media Group with access to 45.3 million consumers world wide spends \$12.6 billion annually on hip-hop media and merchandise.

Forbes puts the value of hip-hop, as a music and lifestyle industry, at \$10 billion a year.

4.2. HIP-HOP AS SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT

Hip-hop has also become an effective tool to communicate with youth under siege, using the language they understand. Social consciousness hip-hop workers have used the microphone and their message to speak to the youth about crime, drugs and have conducted workshops in town halls addressing the youth about the dangers of dangerous living. Global examples have been used where hip-hop has become an effective voice for the plight of the youth, where even politicians and business people have appealed to hip-hop to help convey their messages.

Since Hip-Hop as proven to be an effective voice for social consciousness, even the United Nations, through the UN-Habitat Messenger of Truth Initiative has realised that as an art form hip-hop can be used as a mobilising platform and as a practical tool in communicating with urban youth in their lingo and their style. Hip-Hop is thus used as an entry point for mobilising and motivating urban youth to organise themselves and to engage in their own plans of action. It is estimated that 80-percent of urban youth can be reached through Hip-Hop, which encompasses rap, graffiti, dancing and fashion.

5. THE SUMMIT, SHOWCASING AND EXHIBITION PROGRAMME

The UN-Habitat will draw on the strength of its Habitat partners, the hip-hop community, youth organisations around the world, government, various stakeholders and invited speakers to provide and exciting, interactive, and value adding summit and exhibition programme.

Using Hip-Hop as a case study and theme throughout the entire summit, topics have been chosen based on extensive research and conclusive arguments that puts hip-hop in the forefront of mobilizing youth en masse and driving a strong message to the youth on how to rise up against all odds.

Two (2) Themes, will be addressed both through the plenary session, breakaway sessions and workshops and each theme has about six (6) topics each addressed by invited guest speakers, specialists, and a guest artist:

- 🚩 Hip-Hop – A Tool for Socio-Political Development
- 🚩 The Economic Impact of Hip-Hop on Youth under Siege

The Hip-Hop Action Summit Network, based in the United States of America, under the leadership of Dr Ben Chavis, a former civil rights movement leader and strong anti-apartheid campaigner will co-host the Summit together with the UN-Habitat. It is envisaged that Moshito as the only recognised and established South African music exhibition and conference organiser.

The Housing and Arts and Culture Ministries will be invited to give keynote speeches at the opening of the conference.

5.1. Exhibitions and Showcasing:

The strong component of the Summit will be exhibition and showcasing of young artist product and talent. Unsigned artists, small independent labels, as well as producers with tracks for prospective artists will be given a major platform to exhibit their product for free. The targeted exhibitors will be young artists, producers, and small labels looking for recognition and a breakthrough into the music industry.

A stage will be set up for young, up and coming artist to showcase their talent. Artist wanting to showcase will be invited to submit their demos and tracks for qualification and pre-selection. Showcasing will take place throughout the Summit at lunch time and each day one artist will be selected to open the day of the Hip-Hop Concert, thus bringing a total of 15 artists to perform at the ultimate concert.

5.2. Other Extreme Sports

Urban extreme Games - games such as skate boarding, etc. will also form part of the concert and entertainment.

Graffiti – a graffiti on canvas half the size of the basket ball court will painted by various graffiti artists invited to the summit. The graffiti will form part of the backdrop on stage at both the summit and the concert

6. PARTICIPANTS TO THE SUMMIT

It is envisaged that the Summit will draw participants from the following delegates, groups or organisations:

- ❖ Local and International Youth Councils
- ❖ Youth Commissions
- ❖ Umsobomvu Youth Fund
- ❖ Local and International Youth Organisations
- ❖ UN-Habitat Partners around the world
- ❖ UN-Habitat
- ❖ Dept of Arts and Culture
- ❖ The Mayor and the City of Johannesburg
- ❖ Johannesburg Development Agency
- ❖ Hip-Hop Action Summit Network (HSAN) – USA

- ❖ Hip-Hop Community and Artists
- ❖ The Media
- ❖ The Music Industry
- ❖ The General Public
- ❖ Other Global Players

7. SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

The ultimate deliverable of the Summit and Concert will be the following:

- ◆ Increased awareness on Millennium Development Goals
- ◆ A pledge by delegates to fight for the plight of the youth living in slums
- ◆ A specific programs designed to increase living conditions for youth living in slums
- ◆ The launch of the Urban Youth Speaks (a book initiative)
- ◆ Appointment of Messengers of Truth
- ◆ The launch of the Hip-Hop Action Summit Network Chapter in Africa
- ◆ Raise at least R300, 000.00 for youth living in slums initiatives
- ◆ Identification of at least 3 youth organisations beneficiaries from the funds raised from the concert

Compiled by

Native Rhythms Productions

(for the Messengers of Truth Project)

RELATED PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF HIP-HOP SUMMIT AND CONCERT

A. Make Yourself Heard – Youth Living in Slums

Two months before the Summit, “Make Yourself Heard” campaign initiative will be launched throughout the continent, using the hip-hop community and media channels, to reach out to organisations doing youth development initiatives to submit proposals for funding.

The purpose is to identify those youth initiatives that are designed to help improve the living conditions of youth living in slums in support of the millennium development goals. Paper submissions and /or videos, based on real work community work already started by these youth organisation will only be considered. No concept or future development initiatives will be considered but only programmes that have been launched through initiatives of individuals or organisations without any support will looked for funding from the proceeds of the concert.

A Selection Committee, comprising of Native Rhythms Productions, the UN-Habitat and other UN-Habitat Partners, will identify those projects that will qualify for funding. Successful submissions will be announced during the Summit, and the beneficiaries will be invited to the Summit to receive their funding certificate.

A methodology for evaluating submissions is still being developed with the help of the UN-Habitat.

B. Urban Youth Speaks! (A Book Initiative)

Stage 1:

Native Rhythms Productions through its vast network of Hip-Hop artists, youth radio, media and other youth formations around the country and the continent will coordinate the collection of rhymes or spoken word/slam poetry from youth living in slums around the continent to be published in a book that will be entitled “*Urban Youth Speaks!*”

The hip-hop rhymes/spoken word poetry will be collected from youth aged 14 to 21 from slums throughout the continent. The idea is to have between 2 to 3 submissions from each participating country in the book. Networks, such as media, youth and hip-

hop organisations will be used in participating countries to select and short-list submissions for the book.

A further committee will be formed with the help of the UN-Habitat to choose successful submissions for inclusion in the book.

Stage 2:

Once completed and published, one book will travel throughout the continent to be signed by the participating youth. Once signed by all participants from their respective countries, the book will be presented at the Hip-Hop summit to be held in South Africa on the occasion of World Habitat Day in October 2005 or at the next summit irrespective of the host country.

Stage 3:

Once endorsed and officially launched at the summit, the book will then be handed to the African Union Parliament as a message to the African Presidents.

Final Stage:

A hip-hop album using the rhymes/poetry submissions from the book will be recorded for release throughout the continent. Producers from each participating submission will be invited to form a team of producers of the album. Proceeds from this fund-raising album will be used to support the participation of youth representatives in town hall meetings and other significant national and regional events.

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