BBC Learning English
Words in the News
26ᵗʰApril 2010
Jacob Zuma reveals HIV status

South Africa's president has revealed that he is HIV negative. Jacob Zuma made the announcement at the launch of a new AIDS initiative. Our Africa correspondent Andrew Harding reports:

President Zuma said he was revealing his HIV status **to promote openness**, and **to eradicate** the silence and **stigma** that accompanies the AIDS **epidemic**. He told a crowd at a hospital near Johannesburg that he'd now had four tests - all negative. Mr Zuma's sex life has been **the focus of intense scrutiny** and criticism in South Africa. He has three wives and has also admitted to **having unprotected sex** with other women.

But if **his private life is controversial**, his public **stance** on AIDS has been **broadly welcomed** here. His predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, questioned mainstream AIDS science, and delayed the provision of life-saving drugs. Mr Zuma, in contrast, **is taking a much more proactive role**. The campaign he's now backing hopes to get 15 million people tested over the next year, and provide drugs to 80% of those needing them.

South Africa is the worst affected country in the world. According to UN figures, almost one in eight people are HIV positive.

Andrew Harding, BBC News

Vocabulary and definitions

to promote openness	to encourage people to be honest and talk freely
to eradicate	to stop or destroy something negative
stigma	feeling that something is socially unacceptable
epidemic	particular disease which affects a large number of people at the same time
the focus of intense scrutiny	a lot of people are looking at his behaviour very carefully (especially to see if he has done something wrong)
having unprotected sex	having a sexual relationship with someone without using a condom to protect each person from sexually transmitted diseases
his private life is controversial	a lot of people have very strong and differing opinions about what he does outside of his public duties as president
stance	publicly stated opinion or belief
broadly welcomed	most people thought it was a good idea
is taking a much more proactive role	is being someone who takes action by causing change (rather than only reacting to change when it happens)

More on this story: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8642864.stm

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2010/04/100426_witn_zuma.shtml