DOES AFRICA REALLY NEED PARIS HILTON?

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Category: Africa

I have lots of friends who work in mission and development work across Africa. These are not publicity seekers. They are the sorts of people who only appear in the media when they are isolated in a country by war or insurrection or when sadly they are hurt, injured or worse... Most of the time, they just get on quietly with their lives, befriending people, translating Bibles, digging wells, working in hospitals and helping kick start rural development projects. But, according to an article in the Times (with its tongue firmly in its cheek), it seems that my friends and colleagues just don't have enough glamour and glitz...

> *letâ€™s start with United Nations goodwill ambassadors. They change so much: primarily the definition of goodwill. The skill-set requirements of this rapidly proliferating modern role remain shadowy but it seems to have been created as a way to say, â€œsorry about the bombing/famine/ pestilence - weâ€™ve sent you a celebrity as a goodwill gestureâ€ . Or perhaps it was created out of a belief that the only way to emphasise the utter desperation of a people is to suggest theyâ€™d be glad to see Geri Halliwell. Naturally, the erstwhile Spice Girl is a goodwill ambassador, with special responsibility for the Aids epidemic and maternal healthcare in sub-Saharan Africa. Never say we donâ€™t put our best people on this stuff.*
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> *... Before long, even Paris Hilton wanted a slice of the stain on the worldâ€™s conscience and following a spell in the Century Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood, California, she knew exactly what to say to begin the laundering of her reputation. She pledged that she would visit Rwanda. â€œThereâ€™s so much need in that area,â€ Paris explained vaguely. â€œAnd I feel like if I go, it will bring more attention to what people can do to help.â€ Really? Because it sounds like itâ€™s adding insult to injury. Or rather Hilton to genocide.*
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> *â€œI know thereâ€™s a lot of good I can do,â€ the heiress continued, â€œjust by getting involved and bringing attention to these issues.â€ Yes, Paris was â€œraising awarenessâ€ . But her mooted Rwandan mission - continually postponed and as yet uncompleted - merely marked the latest phase in Africaâ€™s journey. It is now the must-mention for any star seeking to come back favourably from a period of bad publicity.*

Read the full article here.