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A popular international music and fashion festival, themed "Africa Rising" designed to showcase the positive elements and major improvements across the African continent, will make its U.S. debut later this summer.

THISDAY, Africa's leading daily newspaper and multi-media resource, has boldly revolutionized the means through which awareness for African issues is generated through the creation of its third annual star-studded music and fashion event. Themed "Africa Rising," this year's festival will focus on finding "sustainable solutions" rather than simply identifying the "problems" facing Africa.

Following the overwhelming success of the festival - which performed in Africa over the past two years and is making its UK debut this year - Nigerian media mogul Nduka Obaigbena has now exported his brainchild event across the Atlantic. On The heels of two July events in Nigeria, the U.S. show will unfold on Friday, August 1 at the Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts in downtown Washington, DC. With a star-studded lineup of performing artists and stars, this world-class festival is designed to communicate positive images of Africa by showcasing the renaissance of Africa's music, fashion and the arts. The continent's culture will be on full display as patrons will live the true African experience.

Confirmed headliners for the Kennedy Center event include Grammy Award winning recording artist Seal along with American supermodel Tyson Beckford. Additional A-list performers will be announced shortly for the only North American stop in series.

Other scheduled 2008 festival stops include Abuja, Nigeria (THISDAY Dome, July 11th), Lagos, Nigeria (THISDAY Center, July 13th) and London (Royal Albert Hall October 14th). Featured artists at this year's events will include Jay-Z, Usher, Mary J. Blige, Chris Brown, Rihanna, Fat Joe, Naomi Campbell, Oluchi, Tyson Beckford, Youssou N"Dour, Liya Kebede, Alek Wek, Ozwald Boateng, Chris Aire, 9ICE and Shank. Previous THISDAY events in 2006 and 2007 featured such performers as Lionel Richie, King Sunny Ade, Diana Ross, Beyoncé, Asa, Alicia Keys, Shakira, D"Banj, hip hop artist Snoop Dogg, 2Face, John Legend, Missy Elliot, Ne-yo, Busta Rhymes, Ciara and Kelly Rowland.

"Right now the international community seems to be dealing with the symptoms not the problems of Africa," says Obaigbena. "The symptoms are poverty and disease, but the problem

is lack of social and physical infrastructure. This initiative is to highlight the need to focus sustainable solutions on the problems through massive investment in infrastructure and microfinance in order to rebuild Africa from the ground up. Europe is what it is today because after World War II the "Marshall Plan" took hold. It did not deal with poverty, it focused on rebuilding Europe."