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## Press release

### **Red Ribbon Award calls for nominations to honour community leadership and action on AIDS**

*Red Ribbon Award - supporting community organisations to respond to the AIDS epidemic*

**Mexico City, 30 November 2007**— On the occasion of World AIDS Day the global call for nominations for the Red Ribbon Award 2008 will be announced in Mexico City. The biennial award, which will be presented at next summer's International AIDS Conference in Mexico, will honour 25 community-based organisations for their contributions in responding to the AIDS epidemic.

"Communities are at the forefront of addressing the core challenges of HIV," said Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). "Honouring their work and encouraging the replication of community initiatives is essential for a successful global response."

Four of last year's Red Ribbon awardees from Latin America will attend the event to highlight the positive impact the Red Ribbon Award has had on their organisations. Last year's award winners have found that the award has helped them to gain recognition and attract additional funding, which in turn has increased their reach and efficacy in responding to the AIDS epidemic. The four awardees attending this year's launch are from Venezuela (Acción Solidaria), Colombia (Fundación Casa Gami), Brazil (Grupo de Apoio à Prevenção à AIDS, Ceara), and Argentina (Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer).

As a testimony to the global character of the epidemic, the call for nominations for the Red Ribbon Award 2008 is being simultaneously launched in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Today, I am pleased to launch a call for nominations for the biennial Red Ribbon Award to honour and celebrate the leadership of community organizations," said United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Kemal Derviş. "For over 20 years, communities have been the hardest hit by AIDS, yet they have shown extraordinary courage and resilience, and their leadership has been central to addressing the challenges posed by the epidemic."

The Red Ribbon Award aims to provide a global platform to communities touched by HIV. All 25 awardees will receive a monetary prize of US\$ 5,000 each and five of them will receive special recognition and an additional US\$ 15,000 each. The five award categories for outstanding community leadership and action on AIDS are:

- Providing access to care, treatment and support for people living with HIV
- Promoting human rights and addressing social injustices such as homophobia, sexism and any other form of stigma and discrimination
- Empowering women and girls and addressing gender inequalities that fuel the spread of HIV
- Providing support to children orphaned by AIDS and other vulnerable children
- Promoting HIV prevention programs and services

“From the very day the Red Ribbon Award is announced, an organization moves out of its little shell and emerges as a major partner in HIV and AIDS locally, regionally and internationally,” said Betty Makoni, speaking on behalf of the Girl Child Network in Zimbabwe, one of the winners of the 2006 Red Ribbon Award.

After Makoni’s organisation was recognized as an outstanding community leader on HIV it won several other awards and secured substantial additional funding. Many 2006 winners have reported similar stories. In Malaysia, PT Foundation Mak Nyah was given a large office space, free of charge, by the government, and turned it into a hub for a number of civil society organisations. In Tanzania, the Tanga AIDS working group used the renewed relationship with their partners to offer extended training to the community. In Bangladesh, Durjoy Nari Shongo noticed a significant decrease in the discrimination they had to previously endure as advocates for sex workers. In Zambia, Mboole Rural Development received a significant long-term grant from the World Bank MAP Funds.

The Red Ribbon Award is supported by the entire UNAIDS family and the organisers of the XVII International AIDS Conference.

Representatives from the 25 winning communities will be invited to the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, where they will anchor a community dialogue space. This innovative concept provides these small community organizations with an opportunity to discuss their priorities, highlight their challenges, and engage with global leaders.

Nominations will be accepted from **1 December 2007 through 29 February 2008**.

Information can be found on [www.redribbonaward.org](http://www.redribbonaward.org) or by contacting [redribbonaward@undp.org](mailto:redribbonaward@undp.org). All community-based organisations working to halt and reverse the spread of HIV are encouraged to apply.

For more information and to nominate, please visit [www.redribbonaward.org](http://www.redribbonaward.org) or contact:

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#### **Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS’ Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

#### **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its impact. As a co-sponsor of UNAIDS, it helps countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies; build national capacity to mobilize all levels of government and civil society for a coordinated and effective response to the epidemic; and protect the rights of people living with AIDS, women, and vulnerable populations. [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

#### **XVII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008)**

The International AIDS Conference is the most important gathering for the release and discussion of the scientific, programmatic and policy developments in the global response to HIV/AIDS. As the largest and most diverse international gathering devoted to a global health issue, the conference brings together the movement of people responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic to share their lessons and together stake out the road ahead. AIDS 2008’s vision is a conference that promotes scientific excellence and inquiry, encourages individual and collective action and dialogue, and fosters accountability. [www.iasociety.org](http://www.iasociety.org)