



Red Ribbon Award:
Celebrating Community Leadership and Action on AIDS

Press
Release

Red Ribbon Award to present \$200,000 to grassroots activists on World AIDS Day

*Inaugural UN-led prize honours community groups
on the front lines of global AIDS fight*

Zambia, 30 November 2006: Jonsen Habachimba, a 24-year-old tailor from Choma in the country's south, started making school uniforms in the year 2000 for AIDS orphans with a lone sewing machine. Tomorrow, on World AIDS Day, the organisation he founded will receive a cheque for USD \$20,000 as a winner of the inaugural Red Ribbon Award, which honours little-known actors working at the forefront of the global response to AIDS.

Mr. Habachimba's youth-led group, Mboole Rural Development, is one of five local AIDS activist groups to take home Red Ribbon grand prizes of \$20,000. They—along with 20 other community organizations around the world that will get \$5,000 each--will be recognized tomorrow at a series of Red Ribbon Award events marking World AIDS Day.

This year, Mboole Rural Development gave 41 AIDS orphans school uniforms so that they could continue their education. With the Red Ribbon Award funding, that number will reach 100 children next year, also providing them with shoes and school books; it will buy more sewing machines and train more young people from the community to join in the group's work.

The 25 Award winners represent communities around the world that are developing innovative and practical responses to HIV and AIDS, often in the face of war, genocide, and extreme poverty. Their local action leads the way in dealing with the growing epidemic: the number of new HIV infections continues to rise; almost 40 million people are living with AIDS worldwide. Last year more than three million people died of AIDS-related causes.

“AIDS is no longer just a threat to public health; it now hinders broader human development, disrupting education and economic growth, aggravating poverty and deepening the deprivation of human rights, particularly among women and children,” said Elhadj As Sy, Director of the United Nations Development Programme HIV and AIDS Group, who is attending the award ceremony in Zambia.

“The work these communities do is inspiration and essential, as halting and reversing the epidemic will require intensified efforts by all actors, and more effective integration of AIDS priorities into wider development efforts,” he added.

“The Red Ribbon awards give recognition and support for community efforts. This is where the struggle to scale up the AIDS response will be won or lost,” said UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director Debbie Landey, who will also attend the presentation in Zambia.

“I hope,” she added, “that all of us who are working to end this epidemic will decide to put communities first in our work, to make financial and human support for young people and for women a priority, and most importantly, to give first place to compassion for each other.”

The following are the \$20,000 winners, by category, of the 2006 Red Ribbon Award: Celebrating Community Leadership and Action on AIDS:

1. Providing access to care, treatment and support for people living with HIV/AIDS: **Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, Thailand**
2. Addressing stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS: **The All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, Ukraine**
3. Addressing gender inequalities that fuel the HIV/AIDS epidemic: **The Girl Child Network, Zimbabwe**
4. Promoting HIV/AIDS prevention programmes: **Durjoy Nari Shongo, Bangladesh**
5. Providing support to children orphaned by AIDS and other vulnerable children: **Mboole Rural Development, Zambia**

The inaugural winners were selected in August from over 500 nominations from more than 100 countries. The Award, led by the United Nations Development Programme on behalf of the UNAIDS family and other partners, will be a regular feature at the biannual International AIDS Conferences.

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More information on the Red Ribbon Award and details of the 2006 winners is available at www.redribbonaward.org

About UNDP: UNDP is the UN's global network to help people meet their development needs and build a better life. We are active in 166 countries, working as a trusted partner with governments, civil society and the private sector to help them build their own solutions to global and national development challenges. For more information, go to www.undp.org.

About UNAIDS: UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS secretariat works on the ground in more than 75 countries world wide. www.unaids.org

