

ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 to Shine Spotlight on Children and Young People Affected by HIV

**Youth-focused HIV Prevention Campaign to Premiere
Before Audience of Two Billion**

DUBAI/GENEVA/NEW YORK/ KINGSTON/BRIDGETOWN, 6 March, 2007 – The International Cricket Council (ICC) will team up with UNAIDS, UNICEF and the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 to highlight the situation of children and young people living with and affected by HIV.

More than two billion television viewers are expected to tune in to the seven week long ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, which begins with an Opening Ceremony on 11 March in Jamaica. Activities at the event will draw attention to the issues facing children and young people affected by HIV and highlight the resources and actions required to address them. The public, especially young people aged 15-24, will get information on the stigma and discrimination around HIV and on how to protect themselves against the virus. The partnership is part of the ICC's commitment to promoting the Spirit of Cricket and its positive impact on society.

"The Spirit of Cricket is a special part of our game and is a concept that stretches beyond the boundaries of the outfield," said ICC President Percy Sonn. "We hope the range of activities delivered at the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 will make a difference to raising awareness and reducing stigma around HIV in the Caribbean and across the ever-growing cricket world. By encouraging high profile players to support this campaign, we hope to be able to engage those who may otherwise be difficult to reach."

Through high profile activities around cricket's biggest event, the ICC will support the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign launched in 2005 by UNICEF, UNAIDS and other partners.

A series of PSAs have been produced, each lasting 30 seconds, which will be available to broadcasters free of charge. The PSAs feature leading players, including Ricky Ponting from Australia and Rahul Dravid from India, speaking about how HIV affects children.

Players and officials from each team will wear the red and blue ribbon of the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign during their first games and during the final. Players will also visit programmes supporting children and young people affected by HIV.

"Young people today have never known a world without AIDS. Sports stars – such as top cricket players – can act as role models for today's young generation and reach out to them on AIDS issues," said UNAIDS Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot. "Sport is a force for change that can break down barriers, build self-esteem and teach life skills and social behaviour. By highlighting AIDS issues, the ICC Cricket World Cup and its cricketing stars are showing exactly the kind of exceptional response needed for the exceptional challenge of AIDS."

The Unite for Children, Unite Against Aids campaign promotes four key areas: prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; increased access to antiretroviral therapy for children and young people who need treatment; education programmes to help prevent HIV transmission; and increased support for children who are orphaned and left vulnerable by AIDS.

"Children have been the missing face of the AIDS pandemic," said UNICEF Executive Director Ann M. Veneman. "The International Cricket Council will be a powerful ally in ensuring that children are at the heart of the global response to the epidemic."

The ICC is also being supported in this effort by the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP), a coalition of over 50 broadcasters in 23 Caribbean countries and territories. The CBMP's new regional media campaign, LIVE UP, aims to inspire the people of the Caribbean, especially youth, to consider what they can do to stem the spread of HIV.

"The exceptional reach of broadcast media in the Caribbean gives us a unique opportunity to educate audiences about how to avoid HIV, and how to combat the stigma and discrimination that surround the disease," noted CBMP Steering Committee Chair Allyson Leacock. "By doing what we do best, communicating with our neighbors, members of the CBMP are helping our audience to remain healthy and well-informed, while we all work together to reduce the impact of HIV in our region."

The CBMP is producing a series of televised public services announcements (PSAs), as part of an ongoing media campaign, targeted to young people. This will be debuted by Caribbean broadcasters during the event. The spots encourage young people to take action to prevent HIV infection, including talking openly with parents, teachers and friends about HIV, being informed, using protection and getting tested. Viewers will be encouraged to visit a new website, (www.iliveup.com), providing information, local resources and the stories of young people affected by HIV.

Cricket is popular in many of the countries that are most impacted by AIDS, including India and South Africa. Together, these two countries are home to around 11 million of the 40 million people estimated to be living with HIV.

In the Caribbean, where the ICC Cricket World Cup is being held, UNAIDS estimated that 250,000 people were living with HIV in 2006, 15,000 of which were children aged 0-14 years. It was also estimated that in 2006, 1.1% of young women and 0.5% of young men aged 15-24 were living with HIV in the Caribbean and that around 27,000 people became newly infected with the virus in 2006 alone.

Cricket is also a major sport in many donor countries that are active in the global AIDS response, including Australia, Canada, England, the Netherlands and New Zealand – all competitors in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007.

BACKGROUND

For more information: www.uniteforchildren.org

For broadcasters: to download a video news release and the series of 15 30-second public service announcements (PSAs), featuring leading players, visit <http://www.thenewsmarket.com/unicef>



UNITE FOR CHILDREN UNITE AGAINST AIDS



International Cricket Council (ICC)

In September 2003 the ICC became the first global sporting body to enter into a partnership with UNAIDS to help raise awareness and reduce stigma around AIDS. This partnership, which has seen a series of activities take place since its inception, including annual activities on World AIDS Day and at major ICC events, was joined by UNICEF in 2006.

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 80 countries world wide. Visit the UNAIDS website at: www.unaids.org

UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in 155 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. Visit the UNICEF website at: www.unicef.org

Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP)

The CBMP unites over 50 top broadcasters from 23 countries in the region's first coordinated media response to the pandemic. The Partnership shares information and resources to expand AIDS-related programming and public education activities across the Caribbean. The CBMP is overseen by a Steering Committee of broadcast executives representing a diverse constituency of media houses and countries from the region, with strategic and technical guidance and production support from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The Ford Foundation and the Elton John AIDS Foundation provide additional financial support. For more information, visit: www.cbmphiv.org.

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