

**CMC, March 8, 2007**

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, CMC - More than 50 television and radio stations across the region will on Sunday launch a pan-Caribbean campaign to empower young people to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS across the region.

The media-led "LIVE UP: Love. Protect, Respect." campaign, which is being spear-headed by the Caribbean Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP), will be launched at the opening ceremony of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 in Jamaica.

"LIVE UP is not a campaign of one broadcaster, one country, or even one year. As the first media-led AIDS education effort to span the entire Caribbean region, LIVE Up will involve major broadcasters on every island working together, across different media but with unified messages and a shared approach to help turn back this disease and protect the health of our young people.

"LIVE UP focuses on what young people can do to help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and how the region can come together to create a more open, supportive environment for people already living with the virus," CBMP Steering Committee Chair Dr Allyson Leacock said.

The media messages will be transmitted through new locally-produced radio and television public service announcements featuring diverse voices of young people, regular news packages, original long-form entertainment and public affairs programming and complementary local programming, the broadcasters added.

Dr. Amery Brown, Technical Director for the Trinidad National AIDS Committee, said that with millions expected to take in the cricketing action either at the games or through television coverage, the CWC provided the perfect avenue to put the HIV/AIDS message across.

"Many people would be either at the games or sitting in front of their television screens and it's the partnerships that are developing with the media to help get the right information, there is an opportunity to reach a significant segment of the population during this period," Brown added.

He said the campaign would target young people in the 15–24 age group on how to protect against contracting the virus.

"HIV is, as we said before, quite complex. We should never feel we can build an HIV proof border or fence or somehow screen HIV from coming into our country; it can't be dealt with in that way at all. In fact that can have negative repercussions," he added.

Dr. Brown said the CWC created great opportunities for the good and the bad of the virus.

"And while we can look at this large sporting and social event as a threat with regard to the transmission of HIV it's also an opportunity, because it's an opportunity to reach large numbers of persons at the same time.

"So we should use it really as an opportunity to get the right messages across ,inform persons with regard to risk of unprotected sex, sex with non-regular or casual partners etcetera" Dr. Brown said.