

Coalition of Caribbean broadcasters launches new media campaign on HIV/AIDS

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In conjunction with the opening of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, an unprecedented coalition of more than 50 television and radio broadcasters across the Caribbean will launch LIVE UP: Love. Protect. Respect. – the first pan-Caribbean effort led by broadcasters to inspire and empower young people to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS across the region.

The historic, multiyear campaign will employ positive, inspirational messages to encourage audiences across the Caribbean, especially young people, to better understand their HIV risk and take personal action in response. The campaign's messages of hope and positive action are being broadcast in 23 nations by members of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP). "LIVE UP is not a campaign of one broadcaster, one country, or even one year," noted CBMP Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Allyson Leacock. "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."

Developed by the CBMP with support from a regional advisory committee of media and HIV/AIDS experts, the LIVE UP campaign is a multi-platform approach that extends HIV/AIDS content across all programming platforms and genres, including:

- * New, locally-produced television and radio public service announcements (PSAs) featuring the diverse voices of young men and women from across the Caribbean;
- * Original long-form entertainment and public affairs programming;
- * Complementary local programming developed by national and regional broadcasters;
- * Regular news packages, and;
- * Rights-free programming adapted for the campaign from international broadcast partners, including Black Entertainment Television (BET) and MTV, among others.

All campaign programming encourages listeners and viewers to visit a new website (www.iliveup.com) to find information, local resources, and personal stories on HIV/AIDS and related issues. Subsequent phases of the campaign will integrate popular new communications technologies, such as text messaging, in an effort to engage and inform young people.

Officials noted that the LIVE UP campaign is not only unique in its messaging, but in its multiplatform, coordinated approach as well. "LIVE UP represents a new and innovative model of collaboration by media companies – working together, and in partnership with local and international organizations, to help fight HIV/AIDS across companies and country boundaries," said Drew Altman, President and CEO of the Kaiser Family Foundation, which helped launch the initiative and provides ongoing strategic and operational support to the CBMP Steering Committee.

The Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS began just ten months ago, when top media executives from across the region met in Barbados and committed to work together to create new, coordinated media initiatives to help stem the spread of HIV and fight AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in the region.

Through the CBMP, more than 50 media houses in 23 countries share information and resources, including rights-free programming on HIV/AIDS, in a joint effort to significantly expand HIV awareness across the Caribbean. CBMP member companies have agreed to dedicate at least 30 seconds every hour (12 minutes per day) to HIV/AIDS programming and messages.

This historic effort has been joined by the International Cricket Council (ICC), which is lending its support and that of its star players by making HIV/AIDS the official health focus of the tournament. LIVE UP public service announcements will premiere at the opening of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, and will be featured throughout the games.

The Caribbean is the region most affected by HIV/AIDS in this hemisphere, and is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the impact of the disease. AIDS is a leading cause of death among adults (ages 15-44) in the Caribbean, and 250,000 of the region's residents are living with HIV or AIDS. Half of those are women, and a third are young people between the ages of 15-24.

"HIV/AIDS is a Caribbean problem, and LIVE UP is an important step forward in the Caribbean response," said Sir George Alleyne, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"HIV/AIDS is part of our daily lives, and we must talk about it on television, on the radio, and at a regional event such as the Cricket World Cup." "LIVE UP is about hope, empowerment and possibility," said Scott Campbell, Executive Director of

the Elton John AIDS Foundation, which provides financial support for the campaign. "The campaign speaks to all people, but young people especially, with respect, love, and with clear messages about staying HIVfree and caring for those living with HIV and AIDS."

"Through LIVE UP and the larger CBMP effort, Caribbean broadcasters are using their tremendous influence in society to encourage all of their audiences, especially young people, to live healthy lives, free from the threat of HIV/AIDS. This is the kind of innovative, positive and collaborative effort that the Ford Foundation is proud to support," said Ford Foundation Deputy Vice President Jacob Gayle.

The Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS was inspired by the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI), launched in January 2004 by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and developed by the Kaiser Family Foundation and UNAIDS.

In addition to the Partnership's on-air activities, the CBMP organizes creative workshops to develop new programming on HIV/AIDS, develops and distributes original, rights-free programming, and provides briefings and training on HIV issues to regional journalists, editors, producers, and on-air personalities.

UNAIDS 2006 figures show nearly 170 thousand new cases in the Caribbean, which is the second most affected world region, after the African Sub Saharan, Dominican Republic and Haiti.