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Special AIDS drive for CWC

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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.

This was announced yesterday as ICC formally launched its global partnership with the three organisations. The partnership is part of 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** 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, ICC will support the **Unite For Children, Unite Against AIDS** campaign launched in 2005 by UNICEF, UNAIDS and other partners.

A series of public service announcements (PSAs) have been produced, each lasting 30 seconds, which will be available to broadcasters free of charge.

They feature leading players, including Ricky Ponting from Australia and Rahul Dravid from India, speaking about how HIV affects children.

In addition, 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.

To date in the Eastern Caribbean, visits by cricketers are scheduled for UNICEF-supported projects in St Kitts by The Netherlands and by the Australian team and for St Lucia by cricketers from England and New Zealand.

Further, banners bearing the message **HIV Prevention . . . It Begins With You** with the **ICC, Cricket World Cup** and the **Unite For Children And Unite Against AIDS** logos are being placed strategically around host countries.

"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."

UNICEF executive director Ann M. Veneman said children "have been the missing face of the AIDS pandemic".

"The ICC 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.
