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Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS Marks Achievements of First Year and Plans for Expansion

Media Executives Strategize on New Programming and Other Ways To Make HIV/AIDS-Related Information More Accessible and Widely Available

30 August 2007, ST. KITTS – Media executives from throughout the Caribbean gathered in St. Kitts today for their 1st Annual Executive Meeting of Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP) to take stock and to strategize on how to build on the momentum that the Partnership has created since its launch in May 2006. The CBMP is a growing coalition of over 40 Caribbean media houses from 23 countries committed to expanding HIV/AIDS-related programming and public education activities across the region.

Due to the initial success and commitment of member media houses, the CBMP announced today that it is working to establish a regional headquarters in Barbados headed by an Executive Director and small team of local staff. The establishment of this office is intended to cement regional leadership of the CBMP with the Executive Director position being filled by Dr. Allyson Leacock, who has served as the CBMP's Steering Committee Chair since 2006. Dr. David McBean, President of the CVM Communications Group and a founding CBMP member, was named Chair of the CBMP's Steering Committee, a team of media executives that provide direction to the organization's program activities. Ensuring that the CBMP continues to have the necessary resources, the Ford Foundation and Elton John AIDS Foundation announced today that they have renewed and increased their financial support for the coming year, and the Kaiser Family Foundation will continue to provide strategic and production support to the Partnership.

"The CBMP has provided a unique opportunity for broadcasters throughout the Caribbean to take concrete action to help fight the AIDS pandemic. Eight in ten of the CBMP members have increased resources and airtime devoted to HIV/AIDS," said CBMP Executive Director, Dr. Allyson Leacock. "By establishing a Caribbean-based headquarters, we're ensuring that the Partnership remains engaged with regional leadership."

In the coming year, the CBMP will continue to develop and share new rights-free programming, expand its online presence and help bolster the capacity of CBMP members to create their own unique HIV/AIDS-related content. The CBMP is working to launch a monthly magazine-style show to explore a variety of HIV/AIDS-related issues in comprehensive and creative ways with segments contributed by broadcast members. In addition, new targeted public service ads (PSAs) will be produced to inform about HIV/AIDS and promote testing; while a workshop is also planned for radio D.J.s and other on-air talent. A cross-cutting cutting message of all CBMP's programming is to address the pervasive stigma around HIV/AIDS in the region.

While embarking on these programme initiatives, the CBMP will continue to liaise with local and regional partners, including national AIDS commissions and networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, to ensure that activities are consistent and complementary to other prevention and treatment activities in the Caribbean. The CBMP will also continue to expand its broadcast membership, with an emphasis on recruiting media houses across the wider Caribbean region.

“The CBMP has an ambitious agenda for the coming year that will feature new compelling, programming and enhanced online information to expand the reach and impact of our efforts,” said Dr. David McBean, CBMP Steering Committee Chair and President of the CVM Communications Group. “The challenge is to build on the substantial momentum created by the CBMP by continuing to engage member broadcasters and produce and provide high-quality content.”

During the past year, the CBMP has moved quickly to mobilize Caribbean broadcasters to combat HIV/AIDS. In March, in conjunction with the opening of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, the CBMP launched **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. To date, LIVE UP has developed 10 original PSAs (5 television and 5 radio); launched a new website- www.iLIVEUP.com; held two regional capacity-building workshops for radio and TV producers; and made HIV/AIDS-related programming and PSAs available rights-free from HBO, MTV, BET, and other media organizations. The CBMP was also invited to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative and was recognized by the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria as a “Commended Program” in its 2007 Awards for Business Excellence.

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure the CBMP activities are meeting the needs of its members and that programming, PSAs and other information are being used, the CBMP surveyed 31 of its members from May 16-June 5, 2007. The findings revealed a promising start:

- 80% say they have increased resources and airtime devoted to HIV/AIDS.
- 86% say they air LIVE UP PSAs several times a day.
- 86% say the messages of the LIVE UP Campaign are “very important” for their audience and the same number (86%) say they are “very relevant.”

ABOUT THE CBMP

The Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP) unites 43 top broadcasters from 23 countries in the region’s first coordinated media response to the pandemic. The Partnership creates a structured framework for sharing information and resources among broadcasters that significantly expands HIV/AIDS-related programming and public education activities across the Caribbean. Member broadcasters deliver HIV/AIDS information across a variety of platforms and formats, including targeted public service announcements (PSAs), entertainment programming, news and public affairs programming, and online resources.

The CBMP was launched in May 2006 at a regional summit of media executives on HIV/AIDS, organized by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The CBMP is overseen by a Steering Committee of broadcast executives representing a diverse constituency of media houses from Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, Belize, and regional organizations Caribbean Media Corporation and Caribbean Broadcasting Union, with strategic and technical guidance and production support from Kaiser. The Ford Foundation and the Elton John AIDS Foundation provide additional financial support to underwrite production of campaign materials and informational resources. For more information, visit <http://www.cbmphiv.org>