

THINKWISE

The Global Cricket AIDS Partnership



ICC MEDIA RELEASE
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Top cricketers appear in the THINK WISE campaign to raise HIV awareness

South Africa captain Graeme Smith encourages youngsters to be aware and take responsibility to reduce the spread of HIV

Some of the world's best-known cricketers will appear in the latest THINK WISE public service announcements, which have been released today (Thursday 17 September) ahead of the start of the ICC Champions Trophy 2009 in South Africa.

The campaign features messages and information to raise awareness about HIV which the organisers hope will make a positive impact on the lives of young people across the world and help to prevent new HIV infections.

Around 10 million people living with HIV are from Test playing countries. This accounts for more than a quarter of all the people across the world who are HIV-positive. South Africa is the country most affected with some 5.7 million people living with the disease. According to the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa nearly 9% of young people aged 15-24 are living with HIV in the country.

HIV prevalence in young people does appear to be declining in South Africa, however, concerns remain regarding multiple and concurrent partnerships and intergenerational relationships that contribute to infections among the young.

South Africa captain, Graeme Smith, who is also a THINK WISE champion, believes it is very important to address the issues of HIV in his country. He said:

“HIV is a worrying issue in South Africa but we all have the responsibility to make the right decisions and take the right steps forward. Through my role as a THINK WISE champion I hope to do my bit to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with HIV to help the country move forward.”

These sentiments were shared by Kumar Sangakkara, Sri Lanka captain and fellow THINK WISE champion, who said:

“This is a disease - it doesn't make you a social outcast. People who live with HIV should not have to sit on the side and be a victim of ignorance. The stigma around HIV today is very sad and I think we have a long way to go to eradicate it, but we must start somewhere and the THINK WISE initiative is a great stepping stone.”

The two captains are joined by Virender Sehwag of India, Australia's Nathan Bracken and England women's cricketer Isa Guha, a member of this year's ICC Women's World Cup and ICC World Twenty 20 winning sides, in championing HIV awareness around major cricket events. This leg of the campaign builds on the launch of THINK WISE at the ICC World Twenty 2009 and will aim to confront a lack of education and awareness about HIV and the stigma associated with the virus.

Five public service announcements (PSAs) featuring the THINK WISE champions will be shown during the tournament on big screens at grounds, on the official event website (iccevents.yahoo.com) as well as by broadcasters across the globe. The PSAs show some of the champions meeting young people in South Africa and teaching them about how they can 'THINK WISE'.

The THINK WISE initiative builds on a long-term partnership between the ICC, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF and the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) that for more than five years has reached out to the cricketing community to work together to respond to global AIDS crisis.

By working with some of the game's top players, the THINK WISE partnership aims to:

- Raise awareness about the AIDS epidemic within the cricket community
- Address stigma and discrimination surrounding the disease and experienced by people living with and affected by HIV
- Encourage informed decision making and safe behaviours to continue to prevent new infections through targeted information and outreach.

The THINK WISE partnership seeks to educate cricket players, coaches, commentators, broadcasters, volunteers and spectators about the AIDS epidemic, particularly around prevention, and deliver these messages at major ICC events and through broadcast which reaches an audience in 184 territories.

In support of people living with HIV, players and match officials will wear red ribbons, the universal symbol of support for people affected by the disease, in the finals of the ICC Champions Trophy 2009.

The THINK WISE partnership will also be arranging a visit during the tournament for some of the champions to visit a local project which helps to educate youngsters about the virus.

To find out more details about the THINK WISE partnership and to view the public service announcements go to: http://icc-cricket.yahoo.net/the-icc/social_responsibility/think_wise/gallery_zone.php.

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Notes to editors

Broadcasters interested in downloading the THINK WISE Public Service Announcements can access these at www.nuview.tv. (Broadcasters can contact Ben Cummings, ben.cummings@icc-cricket.com, +971 50 640 8759 for further guidance on the downloads).

The THINK WISE champions are

- Nathan Bracken, Australia
- Isa Guha, England
- Kumar Sangakkara, Sri Lanka
- Virender Sehwag, India
- Graeme Smith, South Africa

History of the ICC's work on HIV

The ICC has been working with UNAIDS since 2003 to respond to HIV in cricket-playing countries. In 2006, we both joined with UNICEF in the prominent partnership which supports the "Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS" campaign.

In 2007, the ICC also began working with the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) to deliver messages to a regional and global broadcast audience, working alongside the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership (CBMP) on HIV/AIDS and the African Broadcast Media Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (ABMP).

A series of activities have been delivered at major events including the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007, the ICC World Twenty20 2007 and the ICC World Twenty20 2009. This has included leading cricketers visiting local community projects and players wearing red ribbons to show their support for people living with HIV.

UNAIDS

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and 10 UN system organisations in the AIDS response. The secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. The co-sponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Contributing to achieving global commitments to universal access to comprehensive interventions for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support is the number one priority for UNAIDS. Visit the UNAIDS website at www.unaids.org.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is on the ground in more than 150 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.

Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI)

Launched in 2004 by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in coordination with the Kaiser Family Foundation and UNAIDS, the Global Media AIDS Initiative (GMAI) mobilizes leading media companies around the world to leverage their vast resources to address AIDS. Through large-scale regional coalitions of media in Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Eastern Europe – a network that includes more than 300 media companies – the GMAI leverages the communication power of mass media to get out information about HIV and challenge stigma related to the disease. Visit the GMAI website at www.thegmai.org.

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