International Cricket Council’s (ICC) top Umpire and their most experienced Match Referee attend a seminar to combat the stigma and discrimination that surround HIV.
by Stuart Sutton-Jones

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, 5th April 2007 – Sport is a great leveler as it allows people to take part in healthy, life-enhancing activity. But sadly, that is not the case for people living with HIV and AIDS – especially children. Each day young people with HIV suffer the stigma associated with the disease and are marginalized in all parts of their lives, including sports.

To help combat this, the Ministry of Education in Guyana on Thursday held a seminar in North Georgetown Secondary School, to make young cricketers, teachers and local umpires more aware of the stigma faced by those with HIV. Attending were two ICC senior officials – the world’s top umpire Simon Taufel, and the ICC’s most experienced Match Referee, Ranjan Madugalle, who had come to promote their view that any discrimination in sports was simply “not cricket”.

The two ICC guests were welcomed to the school by Headmaster Jerome Matthews before being seated in the audience, alongside Health Minister Leslie Ramsammy and UNICEF-Guyana Programme Officer Dennis Arends.

Fight Stigma
Welcoming the guests, Minister Ramsammy spoke of the need to ensure people living with HIV were not excluded from work, families and friends. “We must fight stigma”, he said, “with medication those with HIV can still live normal productive lives”.

Speaking for UNICEF, Dennis Arends said that while having knowledge was good, it must be acted upon. “It is important that you children make the right choices – you have to act well and choose well in order to live good lives. Umpire Simon Taufel agreed, using a cricketing example to show the children why making correct decisions was so important. “How do you think Brian Lara would feel if I made a mistake and ruled him out? It’s even more important with you in life – you have to make the right decisions. Look after your bodies and your health. Choose properly.”

Person first: HIV second
When asked how he would react if someone on his team was HIV positive, Simon Taufel said it would make no difference at all. “Remember, they are a person first, and someone with HIV second.”

Match Referee Ranjan Madugalle then took part in the ‘Band of Commitment’ ceremony with student Ashantie Junor. Each tied the Band onto the other’s wrist, while swearing to protect themselves and each other from HIV.

Later, all went outside to play cricket in the schoolyard. All present were cricketers or some sort: local and international umpires; an international match referee; sports teachers and young cricketers, all joined in their love for the sport and united in their commitment to ensure that, within the rules of the great game, no one will be excluded because of HIV and AIDS.
The visit was organized by the partnership between the International Cricket Council (ICC), UNAIDS, UNICEF and the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS, to highlight the situation of children and young people living with, and affected by, HIV.

**BACKGROUND**

For more information: [www.uniteforchildren.org](http://www.uniteforchildren.org)

**International Cricket Council (ICC)**

In September 2003 the ICC became the first global sporting body to enter into a partnership with UNAIDS to help raise awareness and reduce stigma around AIDS. This partnership, which has seen a series of activities take place since its inception, including annual activities on World AIDS Day and at major ICC events, was joined by UNICEF in 2006.

**UNAIDS**

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS Secretariat works on the ground in more than 80 countries world wide. Visit the UNAIDS website at: [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

**UNICEF**

UNICEF is on the ground in 155 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](http://www.unicef.org)

**Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP)**

The CBMP unites over 50 top broadcasters from 23 countries in the region’s first coordinated media response to the pandemic. The Partnership shares information and resources to expand AIDS-related programming and public education activities across the Caribbean. The CBMP is overseen by a Steering Committee of broadcast executives representing a diverse constituency of media houses and countries from the region, with strategic and technical guidance and production support from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The Ford Foundation and the Elton John AIDS Foundation provide additional financial support. For more information, visit: [www.cbmphiv.org](http://www.cbmphiv.org).
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