

Press release

Red Ribbon Award calls for nominations to honour community leadership and action on AIDS

Red Ribbon Award - supporting community organisations to respond to the AIDS epidemic

1 December 2009— On this year's World AIDS Day the UNAIDS family and the XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) are announcing a global call for nominations for the 2010 Red Ribbon Award. The Award honours community-based organisations for their contributions in responding to the AIDS epidemic.

The call has been made on World AIDS Day as people around the world come together in global solidarity for people living with HIV. This year's theme is Human Rights and Universal Access which has been chosen to address the critical need to protect human rights and ensure universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

"I am pleased by the emphasis this year on upholding human rights," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "Previous Red Ribbon honorees are an example to us all on how to act with dignity in the face of adversity. The work of community-based organizations will be more effective if not hampered by discrimination against people living with HIV and populations most at risk, including sex workers, drug users and men who have sex with men."

The biennial award, which will be presented at next summer's International AIDS Conference in Vienna, will be awarded to 25 organisations which have shown outstanding community leadership and action on AIDS.

"This prestigious award draws attention to the exceptional work of community organizations all over the world working at the forefront of the response to the epidemic," said Mr. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). "I look forward to hearing more about the outstanding work these groups are doing," he added.

The Red Ribbon Award aims to provide a global platform for communities touched by HIV. All 25 awardees will receive a monetary prize of US\$ 5,000 and five of the awardees will receive special recognition and an additional US\$ 15,000 award. The five award categories for outstanding community leadership and action on AIDS are:

- Ensure that that people living with HIV receive treatment
- Support HIV prevention, treatment and care programmes for people who use drugs
- Remove punitive policies and laws, stigma and discrimination that block effective AIDS responses and marginalize key populations (men who have sex with men, transgender, sex workers and people in prisons)

- Stop violence against women and girls and promote gender equality
- Enhance social support for those affected by HIV, including orphans and vulnerable children

UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador Naomi Watts, attending a World AIDS Day event in New York said. “I am proud to be part of this initiative. The award winners are small organizations, with limited resources at their disposal, yet they do outstanding work that will now be recognized globally. The efforts of these community organizations may seem like they create tiny sparks. Together, however, these sparks provide a vibrant light”.

The Red Ribbon Award is supported by the entire UNAIDS family and the organisers of the XVIII International AIDS Conference where representatives from the 25 winning organizations will anchor an innovative community dialogue space to discuss their priorities, highlight their challenges, and engage with global leaders.

“Building a robust response to HIV is essential for advancing the Millennium Development Goals. Community-based organizations play a vital role in this response – helping to empower women and girls, tackle poverty and stigma, and improve community health,” said United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark. “The Red Ribbon Award presents a unique opportunity to support the work of local organizations, whose efforts and successes will determine our ability to reverse the tide of the HIV epidemic and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”

Winning a Red Ribbon Award is highly coveted by community organizations around the world, because the recognition it brings often leads to other awards, more visibility, more funding and other types of additional support.

“This is more than an award programme,” said Daphne Gondwe from the Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi, a 2008 winner. “Ultimately, the Red Ribbon Award aims to support creative and sustainable ways to provide care, treatment and support to people living with HIV in our communities.”

Nominations will be accepted from 1 December 2009 through 28 February 2010. Information can be found on www.redribbonaward.org or by contacting redribbonaward@undp.org. All community-based organisations working to halt and reverse the spread of HIV are encouraged to apply.

For more information and to nominate, please visit www.redribbonaward.org or contact:

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Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS’ Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. www.unaids.org

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its impact. As a co-sponsor of UNAIDS, it helps countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies; build national capacity to mobilize all levels of government and civil society for a coordinated and effective response to the epidemic; and protect the rights of people living with AIDS, women, and vulnerable populations. www.undp.org

XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010)

The XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, persons living with HIV and other individuals committed to ending the pandemic. It is a chance for stakeholders to take stock of where the epidemic is, evaluate recent scientific developments and lessons learnt, and collectively chart a course forward. AIDS 2010 will be held in Vienna, Austria from 18 to 23 July 2010. www.aids2010.org