

West Indies Cricketer Is Latest Champion In HIV Fight

Guyanese-born, West Indies cricketer Ramnaresh Sarwan, was yesterday named as a new 'Think Wise Champion' in cricket's global partnership to raise awareness of HIV.

Sarwan, 29, joins the likes of Graeme Smith, Kumar Sangakkara and Virender Sehwag, as well as West Indies colleague Stafanie Taylor, in becoming a Champion for the ICC's partnership with UNAIDS, UNICEF and the Global Media AIDS Initiative.

For the ICC World Twenty20 2010, which takes place from 30 April-16 May, the global partners are also working with the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS as part of the 'Live UP' campaign. This initiative encourages young people in the region to take positive action in the face of AIDS; to get the facts, get tested and protect themselves against HIV.

Sarwan is one of the leading batsmen in the West Indies team, having made 83 Test and 154 ODI appearances to date. In that time, he has scored 15 Test centuries and four ODI hundreds to date.

'The issue of HIV is an important one for young people in the Caribbean and hopefully I can use my profile as an international cricketer to have a positive impact on people's behavior within the region,' said Sarwan.

'It is important young people are aware of resources that exist for them, such as the Live UP website, www.iliveup.com, where they can find out about HIV, learn the importance of protection, and understand how to talk about these issues to their partner and friends. By using this event to raise awareness of HIV and remind cricket supporters not to discriminate against people with the disease, hopefully we can play our role in educating young people.'

A series of awareness activities will take place during the course of the ICC World Twenty20 2010 including community interactions between leading players and local community groups in Barbados, Guyana, St Kitts and St Lucia. Players will wear red ribbons as a show of support for people living with HIV in the semi-finals and final and public service announcements will be played on the big screen at matches.

The public service announcement features leading Caribbean celebrities and Stafanie Taylor is part of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership's 'Live UP' campaign that is being aired by 95 top broadcast media houses across 24 countries in the Caribbean.

Top Caribbean musical artists Alison Hinds, Bunji Garlin, Claudette Peters, Fay Ann Lyons and Mr Vegas, as well as Kim Collins, the St Kitts sprinter who won 100m gold at 2003 World Athletics Championships in Paris, are among those who deliver messaging on HIV and AIDS in a 30-second advert which has been shown across the Caribbean since last month.

For more information on Think Wise please go to www.thinkwisecricket.com and for more information on Live UP please go to www.iliveup.com.