



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information please contact:

John B. Capati
HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Country Director
AIHA/South Africa
Tel. (27-12) 342-4484
jbcapati@yahoo.com

Twinning Center Partner and Award-winning African Singer “Lily T” Dies in Zambia

Noted Artist Collaborated with Twinning Center Partners in Zambia and Botswana on a Social Marketing Campaign Designed to Raise HIV/AIDS Awareness in Botswana

WASHINGTON, DC, and PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA, September 17, 2009 — The American International Health Alliance (AIHA) is deeply saddened to announce the loss of one of our partners, award-winning Zambian recording artist Lily Tembo, known to her fans as “Lily T.” Tembo, 27, died on the evening of September 14 near her home in Lusaka as a result of severe gastritis and anemia. Her funeral was held today in Zambia.

Born November 20, 1981 in the central Zambian town of Kabwe, Tembo trained as a journalist and worked at the Lusaka-based radio station 5FM before pursuing a singing career. She recorded her first album, “Mvela,” in 2004. Her second self-titled record, released in 2006, earned her a Ngoma Award for best female vocalist. She was working on her third album at the time of her death.

Tembo, a Millennium Development Goals Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations, recently began collaborating with AIHA’s HIV/AIDS Twinning Center through a PEPFAR-funded partnership designed to improve media coverage and public awareness of HIV/AIDS in Botswana. Working with partners at the Zambian Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM), the Media Institute of South Africa (MISA) in Botswana, and the University of Kentucky, she recorded a song about HIV/AIDS for the partnership’s “HeartsMinds Campaign” in Botswana last month.

Designed to educate the public about the HIV and help decrease stigma and discrimination, the HeartsMinds Campaign was showcased at the Highway Africa Conference in Grahamstown, South Africa, September 6-8. Tembo attended the event along with AIHA staff and partners from ZAMCOM, MISA, and the University of Kentucky. There, she performed the song with fellow artist, Botswana folklore musician Nitirelang Berman, at the Digital Citizen Indaba Opening Reception, singing “Change your hearts, change your minds. Love and care for each other... Don’t just hear it on the radio, don’t just read it in the paper, don’t just see it on TV. Do something about it!”

A passionate AIDS activist, Tembo also spoke with conference participants at the Hearts and Minds exhibit during the conference, challenging them to strengthen mass media reporting on the epidemic.

“Lily Tembo lent her considerable talent and energy to the HeartsMinds Campaign to raise public awareness about HIV,” says AIHA Executive Director James P. Smith. “Her dedication and commitment to combating AIDS and improving the lot of people living with or affected by the epidemic was evident in not only her words, but her actions as well. We had been looking

forward to collaborating with her in the year to come and mourn her passing. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and the many people whose lives she touched.”

ZAMCOM Director Daniel Nkalamo echoed these sentiments, saying, “We are so saddened by the passing of our celebrated singer Lily T. She was creative, passionate, and so involved her own heart and mind in this campaign. Her untimely death is a blow to our efforts, but we can draw strength from her enthusiasm and passion for the fight against HIV/AIDS and keep working on this most worthwhile cause. I think that is what she would love for us to do.”

Speaking from Gabarone, Thapelo Ndlovu, National Director of MISA/Botswana, also mourned his colleague and friend. “Lily T. has made an indelible presence in our hearts and in our minds. May her soul rest undisturbed,” he said.

“I was privileged to meet Lily during the Highway Africa Conference and was especially impressed by her wholehearted embrace of the HeartsMinds Campaign,” says Beth Barnes, Director and Professor at University of Kentucky’s School of Journalism in Lexington. “She was a marvelous musician and a warm and lovely person. I feel so fortunate to have gotten to spend time with her. Her contributions to HeartsMinds are immeasurable and I will miss her spirit, enthusiasm, and talent.”

John Capati, AIHA Country Director in South Africa who helps manage the Hearts and Mind Campaign, worked closely with Tembo. “Lily T was the voice and soul of Hearts and Minds,” Capati acknowledges. “Not only did she write and sing the theme song, but she lived its message. I will continue to be inspired by her music and her example. She will be sorely missed.”

For more information about AIHA, visit our Web site at www.aiha.com.

For more information about the HIV/AIDS Twinning Center, please visit www.TwinningAgainstAIDS.org.

###