

Press Release

UNFPA funded HIV/AIDS Awareness initiative at China Railway Stations

Beijing, China, 16th January 2002 – China's Ministry of Railways, with the financial support of The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), will launch on 19th January 2004 an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign on two of China's biggest railway stations Beijing West Station and Fuzhou Station.

From 19th January until 23rd January 2004 and again from 6th February until 11th February 2004, Railway Health Technology Center will distribute a set of IEC materials on HIV/AIDS prevention.

Train schedule leaflets and small calendars with HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge on the back will be distributed to migrants when they are checking in at the stations. Electronic screen at the stations will display slogans of World AIDS Day and radio at stations will broadcast HIV/AIDS programs. Posters on HIV/AIDS prevention will also be exhibited at the station.

An estimated one million people will have the "Direct Education" by receiving the leaflets and calendars. And an estimated eight million can receive the "Indirect Education" which are radio broadcasting, electronic screen shows and posters displays.

UNFPA and the Ministry of Railways had a one-year project last year in which 9 of the biggest railway stations took part in the similar activities. The activities this year build on that project.

Over the years, HIV/AIDS has become an issue of increasing concern in China. It is estimated that by the end of 2002, over 1 million people have been infected with HIV. Migrants are a very vulnerable group to this epidemic. Given the rapid economic growth and increasing urbanization of the country, conditions have necessitated large-scale migration of the rural labor force into urban areas. Such migrants are often young and unmarried, with little support or access to information or services. Train travel is the most popular mode of long-distance transportation for the migrant population. With over 5,700 stations, and 60-70,000 visitors on any given day in the larger stations, the railway network provides a unique opportunity to promote and increase HIV/AIDS awareness amongst the migrant population and beyond.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is the world's largest international source of funding for population and reproductive health programmes. UNFPA works with governments and non-governmental organizations in over 140 countries. UNFPA supports programmes that help women, men and young people: plan their families and avoid accidental pregnancies, undergo pregnancy and childbirth safely, avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs) - including HIV/AIDS and combat violence against women.

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