



Kingston, Jamaica

December 10, 2008

## **Scotiabank Launches 3<sup>rd</sup> Season of ‘*Speak Up! Speak Out!*’ - Primary School HIV and AIDS Debates**

The 2008-2009 season of the Scotiabank HIV and AIDS Debating Competition got off to a powerful start on December 9, 2008 with an exciting face off between Calvary and Our Lady of Preparatory schools from Kingston. As the first debater stood at the lectern it was clear that the children involved in this year’s debates were destined to be just as impressive as the previous two years. The two speakers Yashema Mortley from Calvary Prep and Yanile from Our Lady of the Angels were knowledgeable, eloquent and well prepared to present their views on the moot: “*The Teaching of Health and Family Life Education to students leads to over exposure and consequent risk to them.*” Other moots to be debated throughout the remainder of the competition will also look at issues involving HIV and AIDS, sexual health and healthy lifestyles.

The main objective of the Speak Up! Speak Out! Debates is to focus on raising awareness levels of HIV and AIDS among young children at the primary school level and change attitudes towards persons living with the disease. The programme will use the vehicle of the National Primary School HIV and AIDS Debating Competition to achieve its mission.

The debates have been extremely successful over the past two years with over 150 schools participating in the Competition each year. Joylene Griffiths Irving, Director of Public, Corporate and Government Affairs noted that “several of the finalists have also undertaken extensive HIV and AIDS awareness programmes in their communities, the most recent being the 2007-2008 winners, Corinaldi Avenue Primary, which undertake

visits to a hospice and worked at community awareness activities. The children have also benefitted from the thorough research process, increasing their awareness levels and creating a better understanding of the disease and its impact on people who are affected.” Mrs. Griffiths Irving explained further that scores of parents have been trained in HIV and AIDS awareness and their responsibilities to their kids through seminars and workshops to improve parenting skills and raise their general awareness.

The actual debates will kick off in school on February 2, 2009 and will run through with cluster, parish and quarter finals. After which, the four top schools will face off at the semi finals in mid May. The grand final will be held on May 27 2009. Winners of the Debate will be getting a trophy and replica for each debater, computers for their school and cash prizes to fund scholarships.

-End-

For more information, contact:

Simone Hull  
Public Relations Specialist  
Public, Corporate & Government Affairs  
Scotiabank Centre  
Tel: 932.0549; Mobile: 322.3233

Joylene Griffiths Irving  
Director  
Public, Corporate & Government Affairs  
Scotiabank Centre  
Tel: 932.0565; Mobile: 909.5211