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Getting to zero — the way forward

BIGGER PURPOSE Carnival targets commitment from Malaysians to prevent new HIV infections, stop AIDS-related deaths and eliminate discrimination

“Malaysians are still largely unaware about the disease, resulting in high-risk behaviour, stigma and discrimination.”

Hisham Hussein,
PT Foundation
chairman

After nine years of perseverance for the vulnerable communities in Malaysia, Red Carnival, one of the largest initiatives for World AIDS Day in Malaysia returns with a bigger purpose.

Themed “Getting to Zero”, Red Carnival 2011 mirrors UNAIDS’ (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS) vision of zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination.

Spearheaded by PT Foundation and supported by Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC), the event aims to elevate knowledge and understanding, change perceptions and create opportunity for greater public involvement in HIV prevention.

PT Foundation chairman Hisham Hussein, said “Globally 33.3 million people have HIV. In Malaysia, nine people get infected with HIV every day. There has also been a noteworthy

shift in the main mode of HIV transmission from injecting drug user, which has predominantly been the driver of the Malaysian epidemic, to sexual transmission. New HIV infections among women are also on the rise. It is currently accounting

for about 20 percent of the total new HIV infections in 2010 as compared to only five per cent 10 years ago.”

World AIDS Day is an important reminder for people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done. HIV is spreading at an alarming rate, people are losing lives because of AIDS and more people are losing their ca-

reers, friends and families due to discrimination attached to HIV.

“Though many scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, laws to protect people living with HIV and information about the condition, Malaysians are still largely unaware about the disease, resulting in high-risk behaviour, stigma and discrimination.

Through Red Carnival 2011, we hope to improve education, fight prejudice and mobilise community support in ending the epidemic,” said Hussein.

Containing the HIV epidemic would need urgent outreach and attention from all — the government, policy makers, law enforcers, health practitioners, social workers and, most importantly, the public.

“This year we want to extend our outreach and mobilise efforts from all parties to prevent new HIV infections, stop AIDS related deaths and eliminate discrimination. We are extremely delighted to have two great partners extend their meaningful support,” said Hussein.

Sungei Wang Plaza pledged its continuous commitment by being the venue sponsor of the carnival for the 10th consecutive year.

This carnival will also see a new partnership with Durex embarking its commitment to the local HIV response for Red Carnival and PT Foundation’s community-based

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programmes. Durex will also be releasing its annual Sexual Well-being Survey at Red Carnival 2011 to provide findings and insights for an effective HIV prevention framework.

“We are committed to working with PT Foundation to reduce the number of HIV and other sexually transmissible infections among Malaysians,” said Nikhilesh Kalra, marketing director at Reckitt Benckiser, Malaysia.

Red Carnival 2011 will be held on Nov 26 and 27 at Fiesta Street, ground and lower ground floor of Sungei Wang Plaza, Bukit Bintang, from 2pm to 9pm.

The two-day event will offer many exciting and educational activities. Booths will be set up to present HIV and AIDS information and services such as risk assessment exercise and HIV testing.

Apart from corporate partner-

ships, PT Foundation is looking for volunteers to assist in the activities. For more information, log on to www.prfmalaysia.org.



*Red Carnival returns this year with a **bigger purpose**.*