1. NBC BANS CONDOM ADS

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has banned the broadcasting of condom commercials on radio and television, stating that such advertisements were offensive to public feeling. In a statement issued Monday, NBC directed all broadcast stations to stop the condom commercials as packaged by Society for Family Health. The statement signed by Mr. Ladan Salihu, NBC's Assistant Director said: "The adverts clearly contravenes the code of advertising practice as well as section 7.2.5 of the broadcasting code which states clearly that no advertisement should contain any item likely to be offensive to public feeling, or disrespectful to human dignity. "After due consultation with the Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON), the commission hereby directs all broadcast stations to discontinue forthwith the broadcast of the AIDS prevention and condom commercials as packaged by the Society for Family Health."


2. THE OFFENSIVE AIDS JINGLE

A radio jingle on AIDS prevention is currently running on our radio station in Lagos. Sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Health and the Society for Family Health, the jingle encourages free sex amongst youths rather than preventing them from catching the AIDS virus. As a concerned parent, I must urge the authorities to put a stop to this jingle or move it to late hour broadcast. Let me describe how the jingle is crafted. Two voices played Angela and Johny who are clearly intimate boyfriend and girlfriend wanting to have sex. With seductive voices, both actors discuss the efficacy of a condom in the act for preventing the AIDS virus. Listeners are left in no doubt that these two lovebirds eventually performed the "SAFE" act.
after the dialogue - of course, with the use of condom. This jingle is most immoral, insensitive and unnecessary. It should be stopped from running forthwith or moved to a time when only adults are meant to be listening to radio. In the first instance, as good friends, these two lovebirds should trust each other to be totally faithful. Besides this, the fact that the target audience is youths presupposes that the campaign should have encouraged total abstinence rather than encouraging free sex as it does. If we are serious as parents and concerned about the proper upbringing of our children, this promotion of immorality should not be allowed to last the next one minute on our radio. The jingle is put out in the morning hours while kinds are getting ready to go to school or maybe on their way to school - riding in buses or private vehicle. Given the seductive nature of the jingle, this is the most insensitive time to broadcast such lustful campaign as it is capable of luring innocent youths to sexual escapades with the hope that the almighty condom provides the needed protection. This is sickening. No right thinking parent will feel comfortable having children listen to this licentious advertisement


3. AIDS CURE CLAIMANTS' DEMAND STALLS CLINICAL TRIAL OF DRUGS

The House of Representatives Committee on Health has explained why clinical trials on HIV/AIDS drugs manufactured in Nigeria are yet to commence, blaming the delay on the request by the claimants that the clinical trials should not be conducted by the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD) Abuja alone. The claimants want the trials to be conducted in conjunction with similar institutes. Chairman of the committee, Mr. Willie Ogbeide who disclosed this weekend did not however mention the names of the institutes but said: "I agree with this thinking." According to him "in the meeting we had three weeks ago with the claimants and the institutes that are going to carry out the clinical trials, it was resolved that the Director-General of NIPRD should co-ordinate the whole activity and bring in all those centres which the claimants want to be brought on board. They believe that they would not want to put all their eggs in one basket. They wouldn't want to depend only on NIPRD. And I agree with this thinking", he stressed.

cure claimants. HIV/AIDS clinical trials.

4. NIGERIA NEEDS DIVINE GUIDANCE TO TACKLE POVERTY, SAYS TALLEN

Mrs. Pauline Tallen is Nigeria's Minister of State for Science and Technology. Hers is the duty to bring Nigeria into the technological age for better development on all fronts. She recently offered insight into her strategies for attaining her job objectives: Divine prayers are the answer to ravaging corruption, poverty, poor health and underdevelopment in Nigeria today she says. She spoke at the inauguration of a new church - "Caring Heart Ministries" - formed to mobilize Nigerian women to pray for the President, government leaders and peoples of Nigeria at the Sheraton Hotels and Towers Abuja recently. Tallen said the major impediment to the country's progress was corruption which effective prayers could solve. "Since this administration has taken it upon itself to fight corruption with all seriousness, Nigerians should join hands with the government. We can succeed in solving this problem through effective prayers and living exemplary lives," she stated. She urged parents especially mothers to instill the virtues of honesty and transparency in their children adding, "This will be a formidable step to stem the tide of corruption in our society." She also urged religious leaders to work harder at propagating the virtues of honesty, accountability and love to drive home the messages against corruption and moral decadence in the society.


5. OBASANJO REMOVES TARRIFS ON MALARIA INSECTICIDES

President Olusegun Obasanjo has granted a waiver on taxes and tariffs on insecticides for malaria control to reduce the cost of malaria treatment in the country. According to a Presidential memo, Pres. 87 dated 02/7/2001 the ministries of Health, Industries, Commerce and Finance have been duly informed that presidential waiver on taxes and tariff on insecticides for malaria control has been granted to reduce cost of malaria treatment in the country. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and NACCIMA had at various times pleaded for concessions on products that positively contribute to poverty alleviation and better standard of living in the country. It would be recalled that President Obasanjo had, late last year, directed the Ministry of Finance to hands off and transfer to the Presidency, matters of waiver, concessions and duty exemptions.
6. NIGERIAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF THROMBOSIS, FORMED

The Nigerians Society for the Prevention of Thrombosis was formed in Lagos recently. The newly formed body is made up of a group of elite doctors from notable hospitals in the country. Speaking at the inauguration of the society for the prevention and treatment of the disease, Mr. Joseph Odumodu, the Managing Director of May & Baker Nigeria Plc., said that thrombosis, a frequently fatal medical condition, is a major threat to Nigerians. He indicated that the management of thrombosis had often been difficult to handle in the country. Thrombosis is a condition that causes blood clots to block free flow of blood to the heart and lungs, leading to stroke or sudden death. It is usually characterized by pain and swelling. Risk factors for the disease include obesity, prolonged immobilization (perhaps due to long distance travel), and major surgery that lasts up to 30 or more minutes. Other risk factors are pregnancy, cancer, oral contraceptive pills; heart failure; myocardial infarction and cigarette smoking. Although no reliable statistics is available for Nigeria, thrombosis is believed by medical experts to be responsible for many deaths in the country.


7. AFRICAN HEART FOUNDATION NETWORK HOLDS CONFERENCE

African Heart Foundation Network (AHFN) conference flagged off in Lagos recently. The theme of the conference, which lasted three days is: "Promoting Heart Health in Africa". The conference according to Professor Oladipo Akinkugbe president of the Nigerian Heart Care Foundation, is designed to bring together members of National Heart Foundations in Africa, lay professionals, scientists, stake-holders and leaders in cardiovascular health worldwide. They are expected to share experience in heart health and develop action agendas towards reducing the burden of heart disease and stroke in Africa.


8. EMBASSY REPATRIATES 18 CHILD-TRAFFICKING VICTIMS MONTHLY, SAYS ENVOY


No fewer than 18 children who are victims of child trafficking, are repatriated to the country every month from Gabon, according to Nigeria's Ambassador to the Central African country, Mr. Ihekaire Ajuru. The envoy expressed concern over the high level of the illicit trade between Nigeria and Gabon. Ambassador Ajuru, who spoke in Owerri during a courtesy visit to Governor Achike Udenwa, expressed dismay over the problem, adding that majority of the victims, were Imo indigenes. Based on this development, the ambassador suggested that the government of Imo State should establish a transit centre in the state where repatriated children could be accommodated and rehabilitated prior to their eventual relocation to their respective homes. Responding, Governor Udenwa condemned child trafficking, describing it as man's inhumanity to man. He regretted that such primitive trade, most of whose victims are from Imo State, still persists despite efforts to stamp it out. Udenwa however, vowed to deal ruthlessly with anybody caught engaging in the illicit trade. He said government would investigate the envoy's compliant with a view to eradicating the menace.

By: Psaro Yornamue. Wednesday, March 7, 2001
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DATELINE HEALTH NIGERIA is a health communication initiative of the Centre for Health Policy and Strategic Studies (CHPSS), Lagos, Nigeria. Critical comments on format, quality and content are welcome.

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