

NEWS RELEASE

Bam! Kapow! Figo scores a goal against tuberculosis in a new comic book

24 July 2008 -- Lisbon -- International football star Luis Figo is now the captain of a different kind of team -- the Stop Tuberculosis Team -- whose players come alive on the pages of a newly released comic book. In *Luis Figo and the World Tuberculosis Cup*, Figo's fellow players are teen-aged girls and boys. Together they win a match against a team of tuberculosis germs.

Tuberculosis is an airborne infectious disease that is preventable and curable. People ill with tuberculosis bacteria in their lungs can infect others when they cough. In 2006, more than 9 million people fell ill with tuberculosis and 1.7 million died of the disease. If tuberculosis is detected early and fully treated, people affected by the disease cease to be able to infect others and can be cured.

The comic book, which seeks to teach children and teens about tuberculosis and how to prevent it, was launched today by Dr Jorge Sampaio, the UN Secretary-General Secretary's Special Envoy to Stop TB and the former President of Portugal. "We hope this comic book, with its thrilling narrative and images, will convince young people all over the world that in the game of life, we are facing a tough match against TB. But it is a match they can win, along with their families and friends," Dr Sampaio said. The event took place at the Centro Cultural de Belém on the occasion of a summit of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

In a statement released on the occasion of the launch Figo urged young people everywhere to take the comic book's messages seriously. "Tuberculosis is a killer, and I want all of you to stay safe from it. I am passing the ball to you -- you can help reach the goal of stopping tuberculosis," he said.

Designed by artist Rod Espinosa with a script provided by the Stop TB Partnership, the comic book is the product of a global competition launched in January 2008. An international jury of cartoon experts, together with representatives from UN organizations, selected Mr Espinosa's design proposal among 22 entries.

Mr Espinosa is to receive a US\$ 5000 cash prize. Additionally his comic book will be exhibited at the International Festival of Amadora (24 October - 9 November 2008) and the Festival International de la Bande Dessinée 2009 in Angoulême (29 January-1 February 2009).

Worldwide distribution of the comic book, which is being produced with support from Eli Lilly and Company, will begin in September with the help of several partners; initially, in eight languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish).

"The Stop TB Partnership has a vision: that today's young people will see tuberculosis eliminated in their lifetimes. We believe this comic book will spur them to take up this challenge as their own," said Dr Marcos Espinal, the Partnership's Executive Secretary.

***Note to Editors**

The Stop TB Partnership, which is hosted by the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, is a network of more than 700 international organizations, countries, donors from the public and private sectors, and nongovernmental and governmental organizations that are working together to eliminate tuberculosis. The Partnership's Global Plan to Stop TB (2006-2015) sets forth a roadmap for halving tuberculosis prevalence and deaths compared with 1990 levels by 2015.

Figo, a professional footballer from Portugal, was the 2000 European Footballer of the Year and the 2001 FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Player of the Year and was named among the FIFA 100. He plays as a midfielder and winger, currently for [Internazionale](#) in Milan, Italy. He was appointed as a Stop TB Ambassador in January 2008.

Rod Espinosa, who was born and educated in the Philippines and lives in the United States, is a comics creator, writer and illustrator. Earlier in his career, his work on [The Courageous Princess](#) at ([Antarctic Press](#)) earned him on the nomination list for "Promising new talent" and also "Best artist" for the 2000 [Ignatz Awards](#). He also earned a 2002 [Eisner Award](#) nomination list for "Best Title for Younger Readers".

The production and distribution of *Luis Figo and the World Tuberculosis Cup* is supported by these partners

- Africa e Mediterraneo - Bologna, Italy (www.africaemediterraneo.it)
- Bedeteca de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal (<http://www.bedeteca.com/>)
- The Belgian Centre of Comic Strip Art - Brussels, Belgium (<http://www.comicscenter.net/>)
- Cartoon Art Museum, San Francisco, USA (www.cartoonart.org)
- The Cartoon Museum -London, UK (<http://www.cartoonmuseum.org>)
- Cité Internationale de la Bande Dessinée et de l'Image - Angoulême, France (www.cnbdi.fr)
- Festival Internacional de Banda Desenhada da Amadora - Amadora, Portugal (www.amadorabd.com)
- Festival International de la Bande Dessinée - Angoulême, France (<http://www.bdangouleme.com>)
- Foundation Luis Figo, Lisbon, Portugal (<http://www.figoallstars.com/eng/flfigo/fundacao.aspx>)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies - Geneva, Switzerland (www.ifrc.org)
- International Festival of Cartoon Stories KomMissia"- Moscow, Russian Federation (www.kommissia.ru)
- Kyoto International Manga Museum - Kyoto, Japan (<http://www.kyotomm.com/english/index.html>)
- Lilly MDR-TB Partnership (www.lillymdr-tb.com)
- South Asian Research Centre for Advertisements, Journalism & Cartoons - Haryana-India (https://www.sarcajc.com/Home_Page.html)
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (www.unaids.org)
- World Health Organization (www.who.int)

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