



VOV BRINGS VIET NAM'S FIRST RADIO DRAMA SERIES TO THE NATIONAL AIRWAVES

Ha Noi, 27 March 2008 – The real lives of Vietnamese youth have been dramatized for the first-ever national radio soap series. The difficulties of communicating with parents, enduring domestic violence, living with HIV and much more come to life in Radio the Voice of Vietnam's (VOV) *The Desire of Life* which hits the national airwaves on Sunday, 6 April.

The exploits of the main characters take listeners to four typical Vietnamese settings: a big and dynamical developing city, a rural village, a mountain village, and a suburb. The producers hope that more than just entertain, they will also raise listeners' awareness of sexual and reproductive health, and encourage them to change their attitudes and behaviour relating to HIV, gender equality, and the need for communication between parents and their children. As the stories of Tung, Ha Chinh, Suu and others unfold, audiences, too, recognize the implications of their own behaviour.

The soap opera, which will run for two years, is supported by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, with funds from the Danish Government (DANIDA) and technical assistance from U.S.-based non-governmental organization Population Media Center (PMC).

"The project is of great significance for population and development, and for HIV prevention in Viet Nam," said Mr. Vu Van Hien, General Director of VOV. "Serialized drama is a new format for us, and we are excited to introduce it to Vietnamese listeners who, I am sure, will be glued to their radio sets every evening to find out what happens next."

Some 80 percent of the 300,000 people reported to be living with HIV in Viet Nam are between 20 and 39 years old, and young Vietnamese are a key target audience for the drama series.

"HIV demands more attention from the nation as rates increase at an alarming pace," said Mr. Ian Howie, UNFPA Representative to Viet Nam. "We are honoured to be working with VOV on this innovative entertainment programme and believe this drama will make a valuable contribution to halting the epidemic and to improving the sexual and reproductive health of women and men across Viet Nam."

The 15-minute soap episodes will be broadcast every Sunday at 8 p.m. and repeated every Thursday at the same hour on Radio the Voice of Vietnam VOV2 medium wave 549 kHz, 558,783 kHz and FM 96,5 MHz. *The Desire of Life* can also be downloaded from the VOV website <http://www.vov.org.vn>. Listeners can give feedback, gain more

information and share their thoughts through an interactive online forum on the same website.

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