



## **Mrs. Deborah Chen, Jamaica's first representative on the World Heart Federation Board**

KINGSTON, Jamaica ..... Monday, 06 July 2010, For the first time in its history Jamaica is being represented on the board of the World Heart Federation. Mrs. Deborah Chen, Executive Director of The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (The HFJ) was appointed Vice President elect of The World Heart Federation's twenty member board at the World Congress of Cardiology Scientific Session in Beijing, China on June 16, 2010.

Mrs. Chen has worked extensively in the field of cardiovascular disease throughout her years at The HFJ and has sat on several international committees. Affiliations with international bodies include her positions as Secretary to the Board of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation (IAHF), Chairman of the IAHF Emergency Cardiac Care Committee, Board member on The National Resuscitation Council of Jamaica and Project Director for the Caribbean Tobacco Control Project, a member of the National Tobacco Control Committee and a member of the Lions Club of Kingston, which founded The Heart Foundation of Jamaica in 1971.

Mrs. Chen is married to James Chen and has two sons Nicholas and Zachary. She is a past student of the Holy Childhood High School in Kingston and a registered nurse who has completed a post registration course in the intensive care of heart patients. She holds a Master of Public Health Degree from the University of the West Indies (UWI) and is currently pursuing doctoral studies in public health at the UWI.

### **The role of the World Heart Federation in the control of heart disease globally.**

The World Heart Federation (WHF) is a nongovernmental organization based in Geneva Switzerland and is committed to helping people achieve a longer and better life through prevention and control of heart disease and stroke, with a focus on low-and middle income countries. Heart disease and stroke (cardiovascular disease) are the leading cause of death in all parts of the globe. In order to address this the WHF conducts awareness campaigns and action, promoting the exchange of information, ideas and science among those involved in cardiovascular care, advocating for disease prevention and control by promoting healthy diets, physical activity and tobacco free living at an individual, community and policy maker level.

The WHF is a membership organization comprised of 202 members of medical societies and heart foundations from over 100 countries. The World Heart Federation is recognized by the World Health Organization as its leading nongovernmental partner in the prevention and control of cardiovascular disease.

Governed by a Board whose members are leading cardiologists from around the world and executives from major heart foundations, the WHF represents the broadest range of those involved in heart health.

According to Deborah Chen “I am honoured to be elected as Vice President of The World Heart Federation because it is a testament to the work of The Heart Foundation of Jamaica. I look forward to the Foundation’s continued growth and contribution to addressing cardiovascular disease in Jamaica, and the influence we have made globally.”

### **Addressing cardiovascular disease in Jamaica**

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of mortality in Jamaica and the programmes and services of The Heart Foundation of Jamaica are focused on reducing this problem. The services of the Foundation may be accessed for a reasonable cost as they are subsidized to ensure accessibility to the general public.

The objective of the Foundation is to reduce the incidence of death from heart disease in Jamaica by prevention through education, early detection through screening programmes and rehabilitation through education about healthy lifestyles.

In order to achieve this objective, The Foundation offers an island wide screening service, supermarket screening programme, as well as screening at private and public corporations, nutritional counselling, hypertension, diabetes, renal and cardiac clinics pharmaceutical services, schools health education programme and a comprehensive emergency cardiac care (ECC) programme. The ECC programme has received the stamp of approval of The American Heart Association (AHA) and all courses receive AHA certification.

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The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) was founded by the Lions Club of Kingston in 1971. It is a registered, non-profit organization and is supported by voluntary contributions that are tax deductible, its own fundraising events and subsidized user fees. A Board of Directors governs the Foundation, and is elected annually.

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