

**Media Advisory:**  
**Kristin Roe attempts swim from Robben Island to Cape Town in dedication to women with HIV in South Africa**

**What:** A swim from Robben Island to Cape Town, South Africa

**About Robben Island:** For nearly 400 years, Robben Island, 12 kilometres from Cape Town, was a place of banishment, exile, isolation and imprisonment. During the apartheid years Robben Island became internationally known for its institutional brutality. Some freedom fighters spent more than a quarter of a century in prison for their beliefs. For 18 years from 1964 to 1982, Robben Island also served as a prison for Nelson Mandela, Nobel peace prize winner and living legend who eventually served as South Africa's first democratically-elected president from 1994 to 1999.

Today the Island is a UN World Heritage site and one of the world's greatest symbols of freedom and liberation.



**Robben Island Swim:** The first Robben Island swim was recorded in 1899 when Henry Charteris Hooper swam from Robben Island to the old Cape Town Harbour. Today, swimming Robben Island has become a nemesis to many accomplished swimmers around the world, mostly due to the cold water temperature, often dropping to 11° C. The swim remains a goal to many swimmers worldwide, because of the physical challenge, as well as the historical significance of the Island. The average temperature of the water is between 11-16°C.

**Who: Kristin Roe**

**About Kristin:** Kristin is a twenty six year old Canadian living and working in Cape Town, South Africa. She is in Cape Town on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health at Dalhousie University in Halifax. She is working as a researcher on Gender and HIV/AIDS at the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa.

Kristin grew up as a competitive swimmer in her hometown of Hamilton, Ontario. After moving to the east coast of Canada, she swam the fastest crossing of the Northumberland Strait on July 28, 2005 to raise funds and awareness for AIDS PEI and the Stephen Lewis Foundation.



Kristin is a graduate and valedictorian of the University of Guelph. She is also an active public speaker in Canada, capturing stories about swimming and her experiences in Africa on HIV/AIDS. For more information please go to [www.kristinroe.ca](http://www.kristinroe.ca) or contact her at [Kristin.roe@dal.ca](mailto:Kristin.roe@dal.ca)

**About Kristin's Robben Island Swim:** Kristin's attempt to swim from Robben Island to Cape Town is dedicated to the women in South Africa who are living with HIV. Her swim is in particular solidarity with member of the Treatment Action Campaign of South Africa. [www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za) Kristin is asking the

Canadian public to make a small financial contribution to TAC by donating through their website [www.tac.org.za/donate.html](http://www.tac.org.za/donate.html) and to email [donatenow@tac.org.za](mailto:donatenow@tac.org.za) to declare support for the swim.

If Kristin's swim is successful, she will be the first Canadian-born citizen to achieve this.

**About HIV/AIDS in South Africa:** Today there are 5.4 million people living with HIV in South Africa. An estimated 900 people die each day of AIDS in South Africa. Approximately 3.2 million of those people are women. There are approximately 1.2 million orphans in South Africa due to HIV/AIDS.

**About TAC:** The Treatment Action Campaign is an AIDS advocacy organization based in South Africa. The group campaigns for greater access to HIV treatment for all South Africans by raising public awareness and understanding about issues surrounding the availability, affordability and use of HIV treatments. It has the most powerful voice in South Africa for people infected and affected by HIV.

**When:** Kristin is scheduled to attempt the Robben Island crossing as of November 14, 2006. The actual day of the swim will be determined on wind conditions. A short media alert will be issued as soon as this date is determined. She will be accompanied by South African long distance swimmer Hester Snyman. Tony Sellymer, a legendary South African open water swimmer, will pilot the boat used for assistance during the swim.

Kristin is available for comment at +27 72 311 0265. This cell phone will be on the boat during the day of the swim.