

# The Caribbean Partnership Commitment

A declaration of commitment to the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS issued on the occasion of the meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean, Bridgetown, Barbados, 14-16 February 2001 and following on the recommendations of the Barbados Conference on HIV/AIDS 11-12 September 2000 and on the Regional Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS developed by the Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS

## Concerned

- ♦ About the gravity of the HIV/AIDS situation in the Caribbean which is the hardest-hit region in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa.
- ♦ That out of the 12 countries with the highest HIV prevalence in the Americas 9 are in the Caribbean.
- ♦ That AIDS is already the leading cause of death among men and women in the 15 to 44 age group in several Caribbean countries.
- ♦ That the epidemic continues to spread and has a devastating social and economic impact.

## Recognizing that

- ♦ Given its developmental impact, HIV/AIDS needs to be addressed through an approach involving all sectors of society.
- ♦ Intolerance, homophobia and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and of those vulnerable to infection drive the epidemic underground and contribute to the further spread of the virus.
- ♦ An effective response to the epidemic should address factors facilitating the spread of HIV/AIDS, including poverty, ignorance, gender inequities and lack of skills.
- ♦ Investing in HIV/AIDS now will significantly reduce future costs and accrue important social benefits to our societies.
- ♦ Although much has been achieved by Caribbean countries and regional institutions in the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, a lot still remains to be done.
- ♦ In order to address the epidemic, an increased leadership and commitment is needed at the national and regional level from governments, civil society, the private sector as well as increased support by the international community.

## Call on all Heads of State and Government and on all Partners to make a solemn commitment towards:

- ♦ Working together in a **Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS** coordinated by CARICOM
- ♦ Supporting the work of the Partnership in bringing together the resources of all partners, including those of governments, regional institutions and the international community with those of civil society, especially people living with HIV/AIDS (*NGOs, community based organizations, religious and academic institutions*) and the private sector in order to achieve a more vigorous response to the epidemic at the national and regional level in the Caribbean.
- ♦ Ensuring that good public policies are adopted across all sectors so as to create supportive environments for the prevention of HIV transmission and for mitigating the impact of the epidemic.

In the aim of achieving the following targets:

- ♦ By the year 2005, 90 percent of young men and women aged 15-24 in the Caribbean have access to information, education and services to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection;
- ♦ Reducing HIV prevalence in 15-24 year-olds by 25 percent by 2005.
- ♦ Reducing the rate of transmission from HIV infected mothers to their babies by 50 percent by 2003.

As well as the following associated expected results which will help focus these efforts and measure progress against them:

- ♦ Reduced stigma, discrimination and exclusion of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and protection of their human rights and dignity.
- ♦ Increased access to HIV prevention interventions
- ♦ Increased access to and provision of appropriate support and care to persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- ♦ An expanded and decentralized response to the epidemic which strengthens the capacity of communities to respond to the epidemic
- ♦ Increased financial, technical and political resource investments.

We hereby call on all partners at the community, national, regional and international level to join us in the **Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS** and tangibly contribute towards these joint efforts.

Signed in Barbados, on 14 February 2001 by:

*Rt. Honourable Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados and Chairman of CARICOM*

*Rt. Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis*

*Dr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary General of CARICOM/CARIFORUM*

We the undersigned organizations and agencies endorse and applaud the Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS and pledge to give our full support as Partners in the joint efforts against the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Region.

*Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director UNAIDS*

*Dr. George Alleyne, Director PAHO/WHO*

*Ms. Yolanda Simon, Founder and Regional Coordinator of the Caribbean Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+)*

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Other Heads of Government and Partners are invited to add their signatures.  
Signed in Barbados, on 14 February 2001:

