



PANCAP ENEWS

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CARIBBEAN HEADS REAFFIRM COMMITMENT TO END HIV AND AIDS EPIDEMIC AT UNHLM

Caribbean leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to end the HIV and AIDS epidemic “with renewed political will and strong, accountable leadership and to work in meaningful partnership with all stakeholders at all levels to implement bold and decisive actions,” as detailed in the Outcome Document of the United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS (UNHLM) 2011 titled *Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS*.

This included reaffirming commitment to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular Goal 6, and recognising the importance of rapidly scaling up efforts to integrate HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support with efforts to achieve those goals.

The Caribbean had a very strong presence at the UNHLM which was held from 8-10 June 2011, at UN Headquarters, New York, USA. With more than 60 delegates representing government, key regional institutions and civil society, the contingent included the Prime Ministers of Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis and St Maarten, seven Ministers of Health and one Minister of Foreign Affairs, who all actively participated in the plenary and special sessions of the meeting. Dr. the Hon. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis and Lead Head with responsibility for Human Resource Development, Health and HIV chaired the Panel on Shared Responsibility. It was one of five panels and focused on strategies for establishing sustained resources for the AIDS response, the changing nature of shared leadership required and the increasing emphasis of the public health response to HIV and AIDS, which is one of the underlying objectives of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA).



Dr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis and PANCAP Chair

The preparatory arrangements for the Caribbean contingent was spearheaded by the PANCAP Coordinating Unit (PCU) in collaboration with the Joint United Programme Against HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) Caribbean Office and facilitated a consolidated Caribbean position that was reflected in the Outcome Document.

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Editor: Allison Ali

Production Team: V. Hackett, A. Davis-Craig

Contact Details: Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) Coordinating Unit, Caribbean Community Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana; **Tel:** (592) 222 0001-72; **Fax:** (592) 222 0203

Email: pancap@caricom.org; **Website:** www.pancap.org

Caribbean To Focus On Several Issues Following UNHLM

The major issues of particular relevance to the Caribbean emerging from the United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS 2011 (UNHLM) are:

- i. The continued designation of the Caribbean as the highest prevalence outside sub-Saharan Africa,
- ii. The commitments as contained in the Outcome Document including the following: -
 - The elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and reducing AIDS-related maternal deaths by 2015. This was articulated in the Report of the UNAIDS Global Task Team whose activities attracted approximately US\$20 Million in pledges;
 - The redoubling of efforts to achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2015 as a critical step towards ending the global HIV epidemic. This is aligned to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6 which aims to halt and begin to reverse by 2015 the spread of HIV;
 - The acceleration of the HIV prevention efforts “by taking all measures to implement comprehensive, evidence based prevention approaches, taking into account local circumstances, ethics and cultural values”;
 - The need to ensure that financial resources for prevention are targeted to evidence-based prevention measures “that reflect the specific nature of each country’s epidemic by focusing on geographic locations, social networks and populations vulnerable to HIV infection, according to the extent to which they account for new infections in each setting, in order to ensure that resources for HIV prevention are spent as cost effectively as possible...”;
 - Addressing barriers, regulations, policies and practices that prevent access to affordable HIV treatment by promoting generic completion in order to help reduce costs associated with life-long chronic care, and by encouraging all states to apply measures and procedures for intellectual property rights in such a manner to avoid creating barriers to the legitimate trade of medicines, and to provide for safe guards against the use of such measures and procedures.

The Outcome Document is available at www.pancap.org/HLM2011

HIV and AIDS: JULY

18 -20 - 6th IAS Conference - The world’s largest open scientific conference on HIV and AIDS – the 6th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2011) will be held in Rome Italy in July 2011. The event will be organized by the IAS, in partnership with Istituto Superiore di Sanità (Italian National Institute of Health), which is the leading technical and scientific body of the Italian National Health Service. [Read More: www.ias2011.org](http://www.ias2011.org)

28 - PANCAP Partners Meeting - The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS Coordinating Unit (PCU) will host a one day Partners Coordination Meeting on 28 July 2011 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, as part of its ongoing efforts to ensure that the Partnership offers more harmonized support to Caribbean countries in their fight against HIV and AIDS. [Read More: http://www.pancap.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=547:pancap-convenes-partners-meeting&catid=99:press-release&Itemid=144](http://www.pancap.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=547:pancap-convenes-partners-meeting&catid=99:press-release&Itemid=144)

CBMP and Scotiabank Host Regional Testing Day

This year's observance of the annual Regional HIV and AIDS Testing Day in over 20 countries across the Caribbean saw a number of innovations aimed at encouraging people to go out and get tested.

The Caribbean Regional HIV and AIDS Testing Day 2011 took place on 24 June as part of worldwide activities to promote HIV testing. Regional Testing Day was initiated by the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV and AIDS (CBMP) in 2008, with support from Scotiabank in collaboration with the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP).

CBMP Executive Director, Dr. Allyson Leacock said "when we first began with six countries three years ago, we never envisaged that in our 4th year we would be achieving or exceeding our target of 20 countries including Haiti, French Guiana and Suriname with over 10,000 people being tested".

This year the goal was 20 countries with a target of 10,000 persons to be tested across the region. Select Scotiabank branches across the region offered free HIV testing on the designated testing days in support of the initiative to increase awareness and help reduce the number of HIV and AIDS cases in the Caribbean.



Statistics show that at the end of 2009, an estimated 240,000 people were living with HIV in the Caribbean. An estimated 17,000 people in the region became infected with HIV in 2009 and around 12,000 died of AIDS. After sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean remains the region with a higher HIV prevalence than any other area of the world, with one per cent of the adult population infected.

[Read More: http://www.pancap.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=535:regional-testing-day-june-24th-2011&catid=64:conference&Itemid=136](http://www.pancap.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=535:regional-testing-day-june-24th-2011&catid=64:conference&Itemid=136)

Caribbean Leads The World in UNGASS Reporting

All 16 Member States of the United Nations (UN) have submitted their 2010 United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) reports in a timely manner and in conformity with the Declaration of Commitment signed off during UNGASS on HIV and AIDS in 2001.

According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) publication *Keeping the Score III* these countries include Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Commonwealth of Dominica, The Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.



For two consecutive rounds of reporting so far, UNAIDS has recognised the Caribbean as the leading region in the world for submission of national UNGASS reports. This in itself is a success story for the region. According to UNAIDS "the Caribbean has proven that decision makers and programme implementers at the country level understand and adhere to the concept of commitment, that they have embraced monitoring and evaluation of HIV programmes and that they have accepted the notion of measuring progress and identifying challenges to ensure future success in responding to HIV".

CVC Honoured in Canada

Executive Director of the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities (CVC) Mr. Ian McKnight is hoping that entities in the region, including governments, will follow the lead of The Canadian HIV and AIDS Legal Network and Human Rights Watch.

The North American entity recently honoured the late founder of CVC, Dr. Robert Carr, who died in early May, and the organisation he founded in 2004. The CVC is a Caribbean umbrella group of frontline entities and individuals working with vulnerable populations. Strongest in countries like Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, The Bahamas, and the Dominican Republic, CVC has advocates in other islands.



Mr. Ian McKnight, Executive Director, CVC

“The award is presented by the two groups each year to highlight outstanding contributions that protect the human rights and dignity of people living with HIV and communities affected by HIV, in particular marginalised communities facing human rights abuses that fuel and exacerbate the HIV pandemic,” a press release noted. “To be honest, sometimes, in our region, people look up and take note because outsiders are taking note,” McKnight said.

His hope, to be specific, is not for the region to award Dr. Carr or the CVC, but for people here to recognise their work and heed the messages. He called the Canadian acknowledgement a “huge feather” in the CVC’s cap. “It brings front and centre, not just the work we are doing, but the issues we are associated with. It says that the international arena is looking on, is supporting the work that we are doing here. It says the international arena is willing to finance some of what we have to do here, inclusive of challenging some of our countries, the laws on the books, some of our governments are going to be uncomfortable about that but it has to be done,” McKnight said.

Sustaining The Region’s HIV and AIDS Response

HIV prevention, care and support should be factored into national budgets and the budgets of regional organisations that share programmatic responsibility. According to Professor Brendan Bain, Director, CHART Regional Coordinating Unit and Director, Caribbean Health Leadership Institute (CHLI), this should be the strategy in order to sustain relevant programmes at the regional and national levels when external funding is no longer available.

“Medium and long term investments should be made in order to sustain HIV and AIDS programming. Efforts to train professionals in areas relevant to HIV will bear fruit as individuals make their long-term career choices. This implies that incentives (salaries and healthy working conditions) should be maintained in order to keep trained persons in the Caribbean,” he said.

Professor Bain noted that the biggest challenge facing the regional HIV and AIDS response was that countries in this region were in danger of missing the main lessons from the HIV epidemic. This he added will have a direct bearing on how the response should continue to be shaped.

“Our children must be prepared for the world, including the sexual world. The responsibility to educate, orientate and train the younger generation must be shared by parents and teachers in every environment, bearing in mind that behavior is more often ‘caught’ than ‘taught,’ reminded Professor Bain.

Professor Bain shared these views in his contribution titled “The Voice of Academia” in Keeping the Score III.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS PANCAP ANNUAL AWARDS 2011

This second annual PANCAP Awards is open to individuals who have made significant contributions to the Caribbean regional response to HIV and AIDS at national and regional levels. Nominees may be drawn from but not limited to any of the following entities:

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Faith-based Organizations
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Media;
- Sports
- Entertainment.

Criteria

Nominations will be judged according to the following criteria:

- Nominees must have contributed substantially to the advancement of the HIV and AIDS response at national and regional levels
- Nominees must be endorsed by a national or institutional body
- Nominees must be nationals of PANCAP countries

CARICOM/PANCAP STAFF MEMBERS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR AWARDS

For further details and application forms, please visit PANCAP's website at www.pancap.org. Please send all nominations to pancap@caricom.org with "PANCAP AWARDS" in subject line.

DEADLINE DATE FOR NOMINATIONS IS 5 AUGUST, 2011



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

UN WOMEN: To what extent do Caribbean laws ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women? How does society explore and resolve cultural attitudes and values that are inimical to internationally agreed human rights standards? These areas were under critical examination when the Government of Jamaica through its Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, UN Women and the Commonwealth Secretariat co-hosted a Caribbean Colloquium on Gender, Culture and the Law in Jamaica from 21-23 June 2011.

Barriers to the full realization of gender equality and to addressing violations against women's rights were discussed by representatives of national women's organisations; Ministries of law and justice, the judiciary, lawyers, human rights advocates and non-governmental organisations from across the Caribbean.

The primary objectives of the meeting were to:

- Explore the ways in which law reform reflects and/or promotes cultures of equality;
- Share Caribbean developments in the content and administration of justice that advance access to justice for women; and,
- Facilitate dialogue on needed areas of socio-legal policy reform and cultural change.

[Read More: http://www.unifemcar.org/ne_new.cfm?ID=112](http://www.unifemcar.org/ne_new.cfm?ID=112)



International Labour
Organization

International Labour Organisation (ILO): A call has been made to institutionalize tripartite cooperation and social dialogue among government and employers' and workers' organisations at the national and regional levels, to advance national development and regional integration. The call was sounded by high-level representatives of governments, employers' and workers' representatives of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean in the *Conclusions of the Tripartite Caribbean Symposium on Tripartism and Social Dialogue: Comparative Experiences* in dealing with economic and social development issues. The Symposium was hosted by the Government of Barbados, social partners and the ILO.

Symposium delegates agreed that Heads of Government should "take the lead in promoting tripartism and social dialogue in the design and implementation of economic and social policies aimed at achieving full and productive employment and decent work." They also concurred that effective and sustained mechanisms for social dialogue required adequate funding and strong administrative support as well as robust, independent employers' and workers' organizations, equipped to promote and defend their members' interests. Social dialogue is the means by which governments and employers and workers' organizations can build consensus on policy issues of common interest, through negotiation, consultation and exchange of information.

In Barbados, the Social Partnership began as a direct result of the economic crisis of the early 1990s. In 1993, the Government and employers' and workers' representatives signed a Protocol for the implementation of a Prices and Incomes Policy. Since 1995, there have been five additional Protocols, each building on the other. The sixth Protocol was signed on 1 May 2011.

[Read More: http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=117&Itemid=412&limit=4&limitstart=24](http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=117&Itemid=412&limit=4&limitstart=24)



UNDP: *STIGMA FUELS HIV* is a multimedia campaign that was launched worldwide on 8 June 2011 in the United Nations (UN) system workplaces, with Suriname being one of the countries that is participating in its implementation. Both the UN House and the Office of the Pan-American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), based in Paramaribo, welcomed their staff on the day of the launch with the alert message: *a new virus called Stigma 2011 (ST2011) had infected the UN workplace.*

Police tape, posters, flyers and stickers warn the UN staff about this new virus. ST2011 stands for an outbreak of stigma that is more contagious than any biological virus.. ST2011 infects those with low knowledge, making them so scared they discriminate against people who are living with HIV.

UN Cares and UN Plus, two inter-agency initiatives linked to HIV in the workplace, identified that there is a noticeable level of stigma and discrimination associated to HIV within the walls of the UN worldwide.

The campaign seeks to create awareness about the negative impact of HIV-associated stigma, which can have the effect of preventing both HIV-positive and HIV-negative personnel from seeking necessary services, with the potential for a negative impact on their health. This initiative also aims to reduce the impact of HIV in the workplace by supporting “universal access” to a comprehensive range of benefits for all UN personnel and their families—including prevention, treatment, care and support.

[Read More: http://undpsuriname.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=117:united-nations-in-suriname-launches-stigma-fuels-hiv-campaign-in-its-workplace&catid=1:news&Itemid=12](http://undpsuriname.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=117:united-nations-in-suriname-launches-stigma-fuels-hiv-campaign-in-its-workplace&catid=1:news&Itemid=12)



USAID: USAID/Guatemala has awarded IntraHealth International a \$6.8 million (USD), five-year cooperative agreement under the CapacityPlus project: *Strengthening the Quality of Care and Improving the Quality of Life for People Living with HIV and Other Vulnerable Populations*. This new program builds on previous and current IntraHealth efforts in the Central American region through the Capacity Project and will take place in Belize, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Panama.

The program will be implemented through two components:

- A regional component to enhance the Continuum of Care Strategy in Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama)
- A bilateral component to expand the Continuum of Care Strategy to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV and other vulnerable populations in Guatemala.

IntraHealth will support the systematization and institutionalization of project strategies that strengthen the ability of ministries of health, social security institutes, and multisectoral Continuum of Care networks to sustain quality and performance. IntraHealth’s technical approach emphasizes promoting local capacity, ownership, and stewardship of all project outcomes and interventions to strengthen health systems to offer and sustain quality services for HIV and AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The program will be led by Dr. Yadira Villasenor and Dr. Walter Lopez.

[Read More: http://www.intrahealth.org/page/new-project-to-strengthen-hivaids-care-in-central-america](http://www.intrahealth.org/page/new-project-to-strengthen-hivaids-care-in-central-america)

IN THE NEWS

Number of Paediatric AIDS Deaths Declines in Jamaica

02/06/11: There has been a 31 per cent decline in the number of paediatric AIDS deaths since 2006, Minister of Health Rudyard Spencer has informed. The reduction, he said, is significant, and is due to the increased access to treatment by HIV- infected children and mothers.

"We would like to see an even more significant reduction in the number of paediatric AIDS deaths and in the number of children contracting the disease," said the Minister, who was addressing the launch of Regional HIV and AIDS Testing Day 2011 in June at the Scotiabank Centre, downtown Kingston.

He informed that the access to free antiretroviral drugs has reduced mother-to-child trans-mission to less than five per cent, from a prevalence of more than 25 per cent in 2004. "I am urging all women, who are pregnant to get tested. Treatment is available for you. Your unborn child can be spared the consequences of living with the disease," he said.

Spencer also appealed to men to get tested for HIV so that they can know their status and take the necessary steps to protect themselves, their partners, families and loved ones.

"Knowing your status is the first step in the fight against HIV and AIDS that every one of us can make at a personal level. From the level of the Ministry of Health, we continue to provide treatment, care and support to persons living with the disease," he noted.

Read More: <http://jamaica-star.com/thestar/20110602/news/news11.html>

Source: The Jamaica Star

Four Cases of HIV in TT a Day

08/06/11: Statistics provided by public health institutions show that, on average, there are at least four new cases of HIV infection in Trinidad and Tobago (TT) every day.

Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rodger Samuel, speaking ahead of the twin-island republic's participation in the UNAIDS High Level Meeting in New York, said that as of March there were more than 25,000 people living with AIDS in the country.

But of that number, he said, only 6,000 are accessing anti-retroviral drugs even though the treatment is readily available. None of those figures, though, include results from tests in private institutions.

On a positive note though, Mr. Samuel said, Trinidad's sister isle Tobago has had some major success in preventing mother-to-child transmission. "They have brought the infection rate down to zero," he said.

There are also other efforts ongoing in Tobago to help stem the spread of HIV and AIDS. A pilot of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) has been introduced in some schools there and is currently being reviewed to examine its effectiveness and determine if it could be expanded to all others.

Read more: http://www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/trinidad_tobago_news/464527.html#ixzz1UN0b4Yrv

Source: Caribbean 360 News

IN THE NEWS

Grenada Makes its Mark on The World Stage in The Fight Against HIV and AIDS

07/06/11: Grenada is making its mark on the world stage in the fight against the HIV and AIDS epidemic, as being the only country in the Caribbean to record a zero percent mother-to-child HIV and AIDS transmission.

The achievement of the program, dubbed Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), is credited to the commitment and dedication of staff at the National Infectious Diseases Control Unit (NIDCU) and the Community Nursing Division of the Ministry of Health.

The Grenadian-styled program was one of the highlights at a high-level United Nations HIV and AIDS meeting from 8-11 June 2011 in New York. Grenada's delegation to the meeting was headed by Prime Minister Tillman Thomas. It included Health Minister Sen. Ann Peters; NIDCU Director Dr. Jessie Henry; and Chairman of the National Aids Council, Terry Charles.

The zero percent mother-to-child HIV and AIDS transmission is a "landmark achievement for Grenada," Sen. Peters. "We can and will speak proudly of that. Many other countries are working towards such a goal."

Read More: http://www.gov.gd/egov/news/2011/jun11/07_06_11/item_3/grenada_make_mark_world_stage_fight_hiv_aids.html

Source: Grenada Government News Service

Trinidad and Tobago: Judge Wants Legislation Outlawing Willful Spread of HIV and AIDS

10/06/11: A High Court Judge has called for the introduction of legislation that would allow for criminal charges to be laid against persons who willfully infect another with the deadly HIV and AIDS virus.

Justice Anthony Carmona, was at the time speaking during the sentencing phase of a 44-year-old man convicted of stabbing his estranged wife to death because she infected him with the deadly HIV and AIDS virus.

"Trinidad and Tobago is replete with stories of one person infecting other persons resulting in their demise," the judge said, adding it is time to pass legislation to protect against the "reckless and conscious transmission (of HIV) to non consenting victims".

The judge referred to recent statistics where at least four new HIV cases are recorded daily in the country and that 7,000 persons are daily infected with HIV globally according to a United Nations survey.

Justice Carmona, said while he was calling for criminalisation of willful HIV and AIDS transmission, he made it clear that the court was not about encouraging "witch hunt legislation."

Read More: <http://www.antiguaobserver.com/?p=59899>

Source: Antigua Observer

IN THE NEWS

CARICOM Adopts Ambitious Targets To Defeat HIV and AIDS Pandemic

13/06/11: The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has joined the global community in adopting ambitious new targets aimed at ridding the world of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that has claimed more than 30 million lives since it was first reported three decades ago.

The UN's High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS in June brought together 3,000 participants, including 30 heads of state and government, along with senior officials, representatives of international organisations, civil society and people living with HIV, to chart a path for the future of the AIDS response

The declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly, including CARICOM States, contains "clear, measurable" targets, geared towards halving sexual transmission of HIV by 2015, reducing HIV transmission among people who inject drugs by 50 per cent by 2015, and ensuring that by 2015 no child will be born with HIV.

The targets are also aimed at increasing universal access to antiretroviral therapy, getting 15 million people onto life-saving treatment by 2015, and halving tuberculosis deaths in people living with HIV by 50 per cent by 2015.

"These bold new targets set by world leaders will accelerate our push to reduce the transmission of HIV," said General Assembly President Joseph Deiss.

Read More: http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Caricom-adopts-ambitious-targets-to-defeat-HIV-AIDS-pandemic_9002875#ixzz1PmByBQOX

Source: The Jamaican Observer

'Medical Triumph' of Prolonging HIV Positive Lives

17/06/11: When the first case of HIV was diagnosed in Los Angeles in 1981, science had no answers to the serious and incurable Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

No one could have foreseen the millions of people worldwide who would become infected by this global epidemic.

Thirty years on however, and the virus is no longer a death sentence.

Thanks to improved drug treatments, which can control the infection, people diagnosed with HIV in the early stages can now expect a relatively normal life span.

Thirty-seven year old Kampamba, who lives in Bristol, found out she was HIV positive 15 years ago. She thinks she was infected by a boyfriend who did not know he had the virus.

The drug regime she follows to control HIV is "fantastic", she says, because there are no side-effects although she sometimes feels tired.

Her greatest joy is her 15-month-old son, who is not infected with HIV

Read More: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-13794889>

Source: BBC News

IN THE NEWS

Grenadian PM Wants Renewed Financing for HIV and AIDS

17/06/11: Grenada's Prime Minister, Tillman Thomas, has called for a renewed focus on financing the campaign against HIV and AIDS.

He, however, acknowledged that the global response to HIV and AIDS is showing some results. He said administration remains committed to revitalizing the country's trust towards universal access to AIDS prevention, testing, treatment, care and support.

[Read More: http://www.weefmgrenada.com/article.php?newstype=1&newsid=1848](http://www.weefmgrenada.com/article.php?newstype=1&newsid=1848)

Source: Wee FM Grenada

International Support Sought for Regional Health Agency

19/06/11: Prime Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas has made a call for international development partners to throw their weight behind the new Caribbean Regional Public Health Agency (CARPHA) which the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will soon legally establish.

Prime Minister Douglas, who has lead responsibility for Human Resources Development, Health and HIV and AIDS in CARICOM's quasi-Cabinet, made the plea while delivering the feature address at CARPHA's Second Annual Partners' Conference held in Washington under the theme: "Charting the Future in Health and Development in the Caribbean."

The one-day conference sought to update stakeholders on the progress towards the regional public health agency and to cement further support for it.

In acknowledging the support of key partners including, the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and France, Dr. Douglas pointed to the pivotal role that the regional public health agency would play in pooling much needed resources to bolster the fight against both HIV and AIDS and Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases in the Caribbean.

[Read More: http://www.caribbean360.com/news/st_kitts_nevis_news/466958.html#ixzz1PmBOA439](http://www.caribbean360.com/news/st_kitts_nevis_news/466958.html#ixzz1PmBOA439)

Source: Caribbean 360 News

Barbados New National HIV and AIDS Commission Announced

19/06/11: The Barbados National HIV and AIDS Commission has a new board which took effect on 6 June 2011, for a period of three years.

Minister of Religion, Psychologist and Chief and International Commissioner of the Barbados Boys' Scouts Association, Dr. Nigel Taylor, is the new Chairman, replacing Medical Practitioner, HIV Educator and Counsellor, Dr. Henrick Ellis, whose term ended on 31 March 2011.

Medical Practitioner, Dr. Beverly Miller-Moseley, is the new Deputy Chairman, while the other members are: Professor Timothy Roach, Peter Wickham, Orlando Scott, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Joy St. John; Patricia Phillips, Marilyn Sealy, Melissa Savoury-Gittens and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth or his nominee.

[Read More: http://bajansunonline.com/new-national-biv aids-commission-board-announced/](http://bajansunonline.com/new-national-biv aids-commission-board-announced/)

Source: Bajan Sun Online

IN THE NEWS

Embrace Male Circumcision To Reduce HIV

20/06/11: Lately, the media has been awash with stories of religious leaders bashing male circumcision as being 'against morals' and 'a licence to commit adultery'. This highlights the need for people in positions of leadership to be equipped with correct and accurate information for the benefit of the population.

Overall, it is estimated that a quarter of the male population is circumcised. The World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasizes that male circumcision has significant health benefits. It is also important to note that the Government has added Safe Male Circumcision (SMC) as one of its HIV prevention strategies.

Male circumcision is for reducing the risk of contracting HIV and should not be looked at as a licence to adultery. Given the Government's initiatives towards this cause, there is still need for support from various health organisations. Information from leaders both in the private and public sector is needed if Government initiatives on mass circumcision are to take off. Since the HIV prevalence in the country is high, with low rates of male circumcision, it is crucial to halt the further spread of the virus epidemic through Safe Male Circumcision. According to studies 4.2 million adults and adolescents in Uganda need to be circumcised in the next five years to avert new HIV infections by 2025. Therefore, expanding safe male circumcision to cover a bigger population can reduce new HIV infections.

Read More: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/459/758020>

Source: New Vision News

TB treatment needs as much focus as HIV

20/06/11: The most commonly used test for TB is still the smear microscopy which is as old as TB itself.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the AIDS epidemic. World leaders gathered for a high level meeting on AIDS in New York in June and according to reports, a scientific blueprint for interventions that will enable us to save a million more lives by 2015 was unveiled.

The Stop TB Partnership released a new scientific model at the meeting, which showed that with aggressive use of existing technology and tested interventions, TB-HIV deaths can be reduced by 80 per cent by 2015.

In 2010 the Stop TB Partnership and UNAIDS set the joint goal of reducing by half the number of deaths among people living with HIV, compared to 2004 levels, between 2011 and 2015. With the new model, they have agreed to aim for the one million mark.

These are great achievements indeed, considering AIDS is only 30 years old. Let's juxtapose that against TB, which is more than 125 years old. We have had practically no new developments on diagnosis, prevention or treatment. The most commonly used test for TB is still the smear microscopy which is as old as TB itself, and misses half of all cases. Prevention and treatment are not much better.

Read More: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/170052/tb-treatment-needs-much-focus.html>

Source: The Deccan Herald