

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

HIV/AIDS in the world of work: A tripartite response in the Caribbean

Expected date of initiation: as soon as the project has donor support

Expected date of completion: for a duration of 2 years and a half

Partners Involved:

Governments: Ministry of Health, Labour/factory inspectors/safety and Health Officers in Ministries of Labour of the countries which will be covered by the project

Intergovernmental organizations: ILO, UNAIDS

Major groups: Caribbean Congress of Labour, Caribbean Employers' Confederation

Other: Employers' and workers' representatives with responsibility for HIV/AIDS at regional, national and enterprise levels, Representatives of People Living with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups such as women and young workers

Leading Partner:

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

The Caribbean is confronting a crippling attack on its development process and on the quality of life of its people through the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. AIDS is already the leading cause of death in the Caribbean region among the 15-44 age group. Recently completed studies estimate that the direct costs (for example, treatment, care and support, prevention) and indirect costs (for example, loss in productivity, social and psychological costs incurred by individuals, family and friends) associated with the pandemic were expected to have amounted to more than 6% of the region's GDP by the end of 2000. HIV/AIDS also affects employment and economic growth in the key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, mining, forestry and manufacturing. Some key sectors in national economies are more heavily affected by the pandemic than other sectors.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has a strong impact on the labour force and the world of work as a result of lost productivity of economically active adults and premature death. As in other regions of the world, the social and economic repercussions of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean are inevitable because the most economically active population groups are the most heavily affected by the disease. In 1998, 70% of reported AIDS cases in the Caribbean were in persons between the ages of 15 and 44 years, with 50% between 25 and 34 years. At present, 83% of AIDS cases in the region are in the age group 15 - 54 years. As stated above, AIDS is the leading cause of death among 15 to 44 year-olds, irrespective of gender. AIDS has increased the specific mortality rate in that age group and subsequently the overall mortality rate in the region. From the individual's perspective, the disease is associated with poor health, absenteeism, fewer working days, reduced career opportunities and a shorter working life. For business, HIV/AIDS means reduced productivity and higher costs through workforce morbidity, absenteeism, increased staff turn-over, loss of skilled workers, training for replacement staff, poor morale, and the like.

A particular challenge to the sub-region will be the affordability of the required treatment, care and support, for those with HIV/AIDS. National health budgets will increasingly be stretched. The cost of care has been estimated conservatively at three times the national per capita income of many countries in the region¹. The impact on national health schemes/social security needs further investigation and strategies developed for meeting the costs.

The aim of this project is the prevention of HIV/AIDS among workers and in the world of work, the enhancement of workplace protection and the reduction of the adverse consequences of the epidemic on social, labour and economic development in the Caribbean. This will be achieved in part by:

- contributing to the overall objective of reducing the rate of spread of HIV in the Caribbean;
- developing a comprehensive, co-ordinated, sustained and strategic response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the world of work in the Caribbean, established through the involvement of the social partners;
- providing a better understanding of the implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic for the world of work in the Caribbean;
- mobilising and building the capacity of government (with more involvement of Ministries of Labour), employers' and workers' organisations as well as persons living with HIV/AIDS to educate, discuss, raise awareness, develop and implement policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS;
- reducing stigma and discrimination and improving the care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS among job seekers, workers and their families;
- increasing competence to develop proposals concerning the financial costs of the epidemic and to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS for the social security system.

Relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic deepens existing inequalities and acts as an obstacle to poverty reduction, while poverty itself presents a barrier to education and economic security, which are necessary for empowering individuals and communities to fight HIV and AIDS. Poverty thus contributes to the incidence and spread of the epidemic creating a vicious cycle which can only be broken through a concerted policy response at the national and global levels. Accordingly, the Initiative is in close relationship with the objective of poverty eradication formulated in Agenda 21 and the Millennium Goals

The initiative reflects the overall objective of *Protecting and Promoting Human Health (chapter 6)*, and the specific objective to “mobilize and unify national and international efforts against AIDS to prevent infection and to reduce the personal and social impact of HIV infection”, highlighted in Section B (Control of communicable diseases) of the same chapter of Agenda 21. Furthermore, since HIV/AIDS epidemic affects the economic growth of the countries, the initiative indirectly touches other objectives stated in the Agenda 21, namely:

The initiative contributes to the achievement of the Millennium goals:

- to have, by 2015 halted, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases that afflict humanity.

Expected results:

By the end of the project, the following indicators of objective achievement will be verifiable:

- A de-acceleration of the incidence of the HIV /AIDS in the world of work has taken place in the countries covered by the project to the extent verifiable through project information and national sentinel surveillance reports.

¹ Draft CAREC Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of the HIV Epidemic in the Caribbean, 2001-2004 (CAREC/PAHO), April 2000

- The implementation of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS, as well as of the national plans in the covered countries, reflects an effective participation of the social partners.
- The information collected by the project shows that the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the world of work is being used to guide policy and programme development at regional, national and enterprise level.
- The access to employment/income for persons living with HIV/AIDS has improved and is verifiable through the information provided by the employment services, as well as by the data collected by the project.
- Some noticeable reduction of stigma and discrimination level at the work place verifiable through data collected by the project.
- HIV/AIDS is on the agendas of the social partners at regional level, as well as on the agenda of ministries of labour, workers' and employers' organisations at national level, with staff appointed as focal points.
- HIV/AIDS is integrated into safety and health committee agendas as well as part of employee assistance programmes at enterprise level.
- An increased number of collective agreements contain provisions on HIV/AIDS in the world of work in the countries covered by the project.
- Legislation drafted.
- Enterprise programmes implemented.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

This timetable is provisional. A revised version will be prepared by the CTA and take account of the views of the regional and national counterparts.

<u>Major activities</u>	<u>Timing (month)</u>
Preparatory activities, recruitment of staff	Before project start date
CTA takes post and office established	1
Appoint project staff	1
Identify national counterparts	1-2
Establish regional tripartite body	1-2
First sub-regional meeting	3
Prepare project workplans at national and regional level	3-4
Identify enterprises for participation in the project	3 and on-going
National assessments related to world of work	4-6
Formulate national strategic plans for world of work	5-8
Formulate regional strategic plan for world of work	4-8
National policy measures/legislation	9 – 30
Implementation of regional plan	4 onwards
Implementation of national plans	5 onwards
Designing and carrying out research	3 onwards
Enterprise level actions	3 onwards
Second sub-regional meeting	25
Reporting and evaluation	To be agreed with the donor
Preparation of final report	27

Coordination and Implementation mechanism

A chief Technical Advisor (CTA) with expertise on HIV/AIDS and the world of work will head

the project. The CTA will be based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and report to the Director of the ILO Caribbean Office and MDT. The tripartite constituents in each country will nominate the counterparts. Ideally, they will be drawn from existing structures that have tripartite representation, such as National AIDS Programmes/Committees. At the national level the project will work with existing HIV/AIDS infrastructures where appropriate, in order to ensure "ownership" of the project and avoid unnecessary duplication. In order to ensure regional harmony and consistency with the Regional Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, a regional tripartite group will be set up. The regional tripartite group will include the CCL and CEC as well as representatives from the CARICOM Secretariat and a CARICOM member State, UNAIDS and persons living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+). The national counterparts will have input into the regional level tripartite group to develop a tripartite regional response to the question of HIV/AIDS and the world of work.

Arrangements for funding

The initiative is still looking for funding among different donors and institutions.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

- The initiative will focus on capacity building among social partners at regional, national and enterprise level for the formulation and operation of a regional strategic plan; furthermore the Caribbean Congress of Labour and the Caribbean Employers' Organization will acquire competence skills and knowledge for advocacy, prevention and support interventions on HIV/AIDS and the world of work
- The initiative will be developed in close collaboration with other UN Agencies, as well as with NGOs dealing with PLWHA and community-based organizations
- Education modules and other training materials will be provided for workers' and employers' organizations at all relevant levels and specific awareness raising and sensitization interventions will be put in place for selected sectors and groups at the workplace
- Specific capacity building activities will be planned for small and medium enterprises as well as the workers in the informal sector
- The ILO Code of Practice will be used to guide policy and programme development at regional, national and enterprise level

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)

Specific links at regional and international level are not formalized yet, however the ILO will work closely with UNAIDS and its other cosponsors, as well as with the relevant CARICOM government agencies and with the Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, the regional planning to be developed and implemented under this Initiative will be integrated in the Regional Strategic Plan of Action for Caribbean developed by the Task Force.

Monitoring Arrangements

The CTA, in association with the national counterparts, will prepare a detailed work plan. The work plan will be prepared after full consultations with the stakeholders, partners and

representatives of the tripartite beneficiary groups. The work plan will include specific performance targets and verifiable indicators of objective achievement.

Internal progress will be monitored regularly and periodic progress reports will be prepared by the project staff according to specific agreement between the ILO and the donor.

Evaluations during and at the end of the project will be carried out according to the timetable, procedures and composition of evaluation teams established by agreement between the ILO and the donor.

Other relevant information:

Web-site: ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the world of work
<http://mirror/public/english/protection/trav/aids/>

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