

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE III
SAVANNAH HOTEL
BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS
7-9 December 2006

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

A DECLARATION of COMMITMENT to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS, issued on the occasion of Champions for Change III: Conference to Accelerate the Media's Role in Helping to Reduce Stigma and Discrimination.

PREAMBLE

We, leaders in the print and electronic media, leaders/owners of the regional broadcasting media houses, free lance journalists, publishers, information and communication specialists, video and film producers, cultural and other artistes, having committed to being Champions for Change at the CARICOM/PANCAP Champions for Change III Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados, December 2006,

Recognising that the transmission of the HIV infection is preventable through changes in individual and collective behaviour, and that such changes are influenced positively or negatively by the media in shaping lifestyles, behaviours and attitudes,

Convinced that the media and communications industry, in its various forms and channels, can play a critical role in accelerating the Region's response in reducing the transmission of HIV, and HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination,

Noting the opportunity to utilize information, communication and technology (ICT), including new and new uses of old technologies to increase awareness and knowledge on HIV and AIDS,

Acknowledging that it is the social and ethical responsibility of the media to provide information that allows its public audience greater freedom in making decisions to meet their human rights and social and civic obligations,

Recalling and reaffirming previous commitments on HIV and AIDS made at:

- Champions for Change I: CARICOM/UK High Level Conference to Reduce Stigma and Discrimination Related to HIV and AIDS, St. Kitts and Nevis, 2004
- CCC Consultation: Building a Faith-based Response to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean, Guyana, 2005

- Champions for Change II: Regional Conference of Faith-based Organisations to Reduce HIV and AIDS, Guyana, 2005
- CAPNET Conference ‘Publishers Against Aids’, Montego Bay Jamaica, 2005
- The Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV and AIDS, Barbados, 2006

Call upon leaders in the public and private media and communications industry to provide strong leadership in the fight against HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination and to protect and promote the rights of People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA).

We further call upon our fellow Champions in the media and communications industry and from the previous Champions for Change conferences to collaborate with us to accelerate the media’s role in reducing stigma and discrimination.

ARTICLE 2

DECLARATION

We SOLEMNLY DECLARE, as Champions for Change, to accelerate the Media’s role in helping to reduce HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination through our commitment to:

- *Integrate* HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support messages into the existing programmes addressing political, cultural, social and economic development and public education issues towards behaviour change;
- *Advocate for and support* the enactment of appropriate legislation, regulations and other measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of PLWHA, and those affected by HIV and AIDS, as well as members of other vulnerable groups in our communities;
- *Support* strengthening of media and communication professionals’ and other media workers’ response to reduce the transmission of HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination through training/on-going education, and other capacity building exercises and research in HIV and AIDS issues;
- *Ensure* the collation, documentation and dissemination of best media practices for reducing stigma and discrimination;
- *Support* existing/new media-related programmes undertaken by the Implementing Agencies of PANCAP;
- *Advocate for and support* the use of new technologies/new uses of old technology, to promote behaviour change in our efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination;
- *Support* grass-roots, community and independent media, and communication professionals to ensure the

access and participation of civil society in the response to reduce stigma and discrimination;

- **Adopt** a professional code of conduct for the workplace, and invite the media and communications industry to recognise and uphold the rights of PLWHA in the workplace, in keeping with current international labour trends including the International Labour Organisation's "decent work" agenda;
- **Emphasise** the need to respect the integrity and autonomy of individuals by obtaining truly informed consent for testing, and all other matters pertaining to care and research activities;
- **Advocate for** the inclusion of appropriate HIV and AIDS educational programmes in the curricula at all school levels, utilising culturally relevant books and other materials;
- **Advocate also for** appropriate HIV and AIDS programmes specifically targeted to out-of-school youth;

ARTICLE 3

CONCLUSION

We the Champions for Change:

Urge the PANCAP and other stakeholders to provide the resources necessary for implementation of the measures and initiatives mentioned above;

Urge also the PANCAP Implementing Agencies to put into immediate effect, guidelines/mechanisms for collaboration between, and support from professionals in the media and communications industry in the implementation of commitments made to reduce stigma and discrimination;

Recognize and express our appreciation to those media and communication professionals, groups and organisations that have led the effort to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination and to deal with its complex challenges through the various communication channels;

Look forward to continued leadership from them and collaboration with other Champions for Change, with the full and active participation of PLWHA, the donor community, civil society, the public and the private sector, in accelerating the media and communications industry's response to reducing HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination.

We the Champions for Change resolve to realise the intent of this Declaration.

Bridgetown, Barbados

December 2006