



# PANCAP Policy and Strategy Working Group on Stigma and Discrimination

## Terms of Reference

(Revised 19 May 2017)

### 1. Background

Stigma and discrimination continue to hamper effective HIV responses. Men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers and transgender persons face harsh legal and policy environments that increase their vulnerability to HIV and decrease their ability to cope with the consequences of HIV, like consistently accessing healthcare. The Caribbean is at a critical point where further progress towards ending AIDS as a public health threat is premised on mobilising a strong and coordinated multi-sectoral response to remove the legal, social and cultural obstacles that prevent access to prevention, treatment and care services.

The Global Commission on HIV and the Law has found guaranteeing access to reproductive health services can help reduce HIV risk; that criminalising HIV transmission wastes resources, causes confusion and harms HIV prevention and treatment; and that countries that criminalise same-sex sexual activity have higher HIV rates among MSM than countries that do not.

The report notes that ten CARICOM states have laws which criminalise consensual sex between adults of the same sex, two criminalise the wilful transmission of HIV and three have laws which restrict entry to people who are HIV positive. In addition, there are a number of laws and policies which prevent young people from freely accessing health services and/or mandate health providers to report children younger than 16 who are having sex, including with other teens of a similar age. While there is widespread support for comprehensive age-appropriate human sexuality education in secondary school, for example, Saint Lucia- 95%, Belize-89% and Trinidad-78%, many young people do not have access. (*UNAIDS, Public Opinion Study on Gender Inequality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Discrimination Against Populations at Higher Risk for HIV, 2013*)

Specific to the Caribbean, stigma is recognized as the main reason for the lack of attention to key populations in prevention efforts. In one study in the region, the Health Policy

Project found that more than one of five medical and non-medical staff reported having observed other facility staff unwilling to care for a patient living with HIV. Additionally, approximately one in four women living with HIV in the Dominican Republic report being advised not to have children while 64% of persons living with HIV report having lost their jobs due to their HIV status in Belize. (Persons Living with HIV Stigma Index)

The 2014-2018 Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework (CRSF) on HIV and AIDS includes a Strategic Priority Area: *An enabling environment that fosters universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support*. Addressing discrimination against key populations at higher risk of HIV is considered a critical pillar of the regional response. The Zero Discrimination targets and indicators included in the 2015 “Rio Call to Action” are intended to support the region in achieving zero discrimination in the HIV response by 2020. These targets serve as a monitoring framework to allow tracking of regional progress in creating an enabling environment for fast tracking the HIV response.

PANCAP leads and coordinates advocacy efforts to accelerate the human rights agenda and to reduce stigma and eliminate discrimination for the region as part of its commitment to providing strategic technical guidance on effective policy approaches to promote human rights and reduce stigma and discrimination

The PANCAP Coordinating Unit (PCU), as the secretariat for PANCAP, is tasked with the monitoring and documenting of progress in achieving zero discrimination in collaboration with key national and regional stakeholders working on human rights and HIV. In this regard, the PCU will have responsibility for guiding and supporting the work of the PSWG.

## **2. The Role of the Policy and Strategy Working Group**

The Policy and Strategy Working Group (PSWG) on Stigma and Discrimination is a thematic forum for:

- the discussion, coordination, and monitoring of initiatives among local and regional key partners; and
- the provision of advice and recommendations on HIV related human rights actions in the Caribbean.

The PSWG functions as an external HIV specialized advisory group for The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP). The group falls under the mandate of PANCAP and serves as a thematic forum and technical advisory group for PANCAP and national HIV programmes to advance Human Rights and support the elimination of stigma and discrimination in the Caribbean.

The Working Group is composed of experts from different national and regional entities and focuses on activities related to the achievement of Zero Discrimination Targets for the sub-region. The PSWG will support PANCAP's mandate of accelerating the human rights agenda and reducing stigma and discrimination for the region.

Given the common focus on stigma and discrimination indicators and data collection, the work of the PSWG will be linked to the Monitoring and Evaluation TWG.

### **3. Overarching Goal**

To advance Human Rights in the context of HIV and support the elimination of stigma and discrimination in the Caribbean.

### **4. Objectives**

The Policy and Strategy Working Group will work toward the following objectives in support of CRSF strategic objectives 1.1 and 1.2:

- 1) To influence regional and national agendas in support of enabling legal and policy environments.
- 2) To promote increased access to sustainable health, legal, social and related services to key and vulnerable populations including the community of PLHIV in the Caribbean.
- 3) To support national HIV responses with initiatives towards achieving zero discrimination targets and reporting progress towards the achievement of the health and HIV-related Sustainable Development Goals

#### **Functions:**

- 1) To provide advice and support to PANCAP and generate recommendations for Caribbean countries on Human Rights and HIV related actions with a view towards

building upon past and current initiatives, leveraging synergies, and ensuring country ownership and sustainability.

- 2) To analyse results and make recommendations to PANCAP regarding documentation (mapping), monitoring, and analysis of the progress towards achieving the Zero Discrimination Targets in the Caribbean region.
- 3) To coordinate among partners the provision of technical support and organization of key activities related to Human Rights and HIV to address identified needs, improving synergies and efficient use of available resources.

The PSWG will be specifically tasked with:

- Mapping key networks and sectors influencing stigma and discrimination in order to identify levers for change at the national and regional levels.
- Developing strategies for reducing stigma and discrimination.
- Developing approaches for education and sensitisation of PANCAP members and senior management of CARICOM, key populations, and influential organisations and sectors.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities of Members**

Members of the PSWG have a responsibility to provide PANCAP with high quality, well considered policy recommendations on matters described in the functions outlined above. In keeping with the mandate to provide strategic advice and technical support, members will promote policies and strategies geared toward building an enabling environment, providing advice and recommendations as needed. Additional technical input may be solicited from identified experts. Members are responsible for consulting with and reporting to their constituencies, ensuring that all issues and decisions are consistently communicated. Members are responsible for providing updates to the PSWG on activities relating to areas of influence.

## **6. Membership**

Member organizations of the PSWG shall represent a broad range of disciplines. Members, including the Chairperson, shall be appointed by the PACC. Each organization

shall designate a primary participant and an alternate. The PSWG will comprise the following **23** members:

**Proposed Members:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>ORGANISATION</b>
1	PANCAP Coordinating Unit (PCU)
1	Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
1	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
1	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
1	International Labour Organization (ILO)
1	Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC)
1	Centro de Orientación E Investigación Integral (COIN)
1	Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+)
1	Organization of American States (OAS) - Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
1	Caribbean Sex Work Coalition (CSWC)
1	Transgender Representative
1	Caribbean Forum for Liberation and Acceptance of Genders and Sexualities (CariFLAGS)
2	Regional Youth Representatives
1	The University of the West Indies (UWI) Rights and Advocacy Project (U-RAP)
1	The University of the West Indies HIV/AIDS Response Programme (UWI HARP)
2	Religious Organisations – Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) and Regional Consultative Steering Committee
1	Pan Caribbean Business Coalition (PCBC)
1	Trade Unions
3	National HIV/AIDS Programme Managers (NAPs)
<b>23</b>	<b>Total</b>

## **7. Meetings and Operational Procedures**

The PSWG will normally meet at least twice annually, either virtually or in person. The frequency of meetings may be adjusted as necessary. If possible, in person meetings of the working group should be scheduled in association with Executive Board and PACC meetings.

Decisions or recommendations will, as a rule, be taken by consensus. The scope of deliberations is expected to entail reviewing and providing evidence based information and options for recommendations. The PSWG will be kept informed by the PANCAP Coordinating Unit of partner agencies' progress in implementing strategies and attaining objectives at country and regional level.

## **8. Reporting**

As issues mature, proposals for presentation to the PANCAP Executive Board and Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) should be submitted to the PACC to determine which policy recommendation issues could be brought to the attention of Executive Board, COHSOD and other governance mechanisms.

The Chair or his/her designate of the PSWG will report to the PACC at its quarterly virtual and semester face-to-face meetings. A brief (1-2 pages) summary of each Working Group meeting will be developed for submission to the PACC prior to its scheduled meetings.

## **9. Management of Conflicts of Interest/Undue Influence**

At the start of each PSWG meeting, participants shall be expected to respond to a request to report conflicts of interest relevant to the focus of the PSWG. Conflicts, both personal and those of their organization must be declared and recorded at the beginning of each PSWG meeting. Persons with an identified conflict of interest will be expected to recuse themselves from participating in the drafting policy options or policy recommendations.

## **10. Confidentiality**

In order to ensure that members of the PSWG are able to participate fully in the working group, certain information may become available to members, which the Chair or other members consider is confidential. Members will be required to retain such information as confidential and confirm their intention to do so by formal agreement.