



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CARICOM Secretariat – PANCAP HOSTS HIV EDUTAINMENT EVENT**

- **Over 50 children of employees will participate in interactive HIV awareness activities**

**Tuesday, August 8, 2017 (PANCAP Coordinating Unit, CARICOM Secretariat):** *The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), the mechanism that provides a structured and unified approach to the Caribbean’s response to the HIV epidemic*, upon the initiative and request from the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General will facilitate an awareness activity on HIV and AIDS titled *‘HIV Edutainment Hangout’*. The special initiative will focus on the children of CARICOM employees, ages 10 – 19 and will be held on Wednesday, August 9, 2017 at the CARICOM Secretariat, Georgetown, Guyana.

The event will be hosted by the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General in close collaboration with the PANCAP Coordinating Unit, CARICOM Secretariat. The first of its kind, the activity is meant to reinforce the message from PANCAP to increase HIV and AIDS education among youth in the region.

Director of PANCAP, Mr Dereck Springer, explained ‘we believe that education should begin at home, hence we are educating the children of CARICOM Secretariat employees on HIV and AIDS-related topics with the intention to inspire other institutions and networks within the region to conduct similar activities. PANCAP has been advocating for an increase in HIV education among youth. This was done most notably during our ‘Meeting of Youth Leaders: Sexual and Reproductive Health’ on April 21 and 22, 2017 in Port-of-Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Manorma Soeknandan, Deputy Secretary-General, CARICOM Secretariat, shared that the response to the initiative has been overwhelming with over 50 participants registering. The event will include a combination of education and entertainment on HIV-related topics including HIV transmission, stigma and discrimination and prevention with an overarching emphasis on how youth can contribute to the end of AIDS.

Role-play, drama and creative writing will be utilised to engage participants in scenarios, which will seek to build their capacity to recognise social situations, which may put them at risk, as well as the ability to recognise and address stigma and discrimination and identify ways in which HIV transmission can be prevented and discuss what they can do to protect themselves from HIV.

'Youth have an integral role in ending AIDS', stated Dr. Soeknandan, 'we hope that this event serves as a catalyst for heightened advocacy and mobilisation of resources for HIV education among Caribbean youth'.

- ENDS -

### **What is PANCAP?**

PANCAP is a Caribbean regional partnership of governments, regional civil society organisations, regional institutions and organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies and contributing donor partners which was established on 14 February 2001. PANCAP provides a structured and unified approach to the Caribbean's response to the HIV epidemic, coordinates the response through the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS to maximise efficient use of resources and increase impact, mobilises resources and build capacity of partners.

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