

*PORT-OF-SPAIN DECLARATION ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR
RESPONSE TO HIV AND AIDS*

- 1. We, the Ministers of Education of the Caribbean Community, along with representatives of National AIDS Authorities, and other representatives of governments, organizations and agencies participating in the Special Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSD) on Education and HIV and AIDS in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 9-10 June 2006;*
- 2. Recall that the Nassau Declaration asserts that the Health of the Region is the Wealth of the Region;*
- 3. Note with alarm that we are facing an unprecedented human catastrophe and that a quarter century into the pandemic, HIV and AIDS continues to inflict immense suffering on the countries and communities of the Caribbean, that a total of 300,000 persons live with HIV in the region, including 30,000 who became infected in 2005, that the disease is the major cause of death in persons between 15-35; and that the prevalence rate in women 15-24 years is at least twice as high as men of similar age group;*
- 4. Recognise that the extensive national sub-regional and regional consultations under the joint collaboration of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) and UNAIDS were undertaken and resulted in recommendations and a roadmap for Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support 2006-2010;*
- 5. Also recognise the political Declaration on Universal Access resulting from the High Level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV and AIDS, 2 June, 2006 as a basis for action;*
- 6. Affirm that Education is a critical sector in the multi-sectoral response to HIV and emphasise our commitment to achieving the targets set for Education for All and the relevant targets in the Millennium Development Goals;*
- 7. Recognise that comprehensive assessments of the impact of HIV on the education sector at country and regional levels are urgently required to inform the development of appropriate response strategies, and specifically those that focus on prevention;*
- 8. Commit to the development and implementation of national and regional sectoral policies on HIV and AIDS and Education and the integration of such policies into national and CARICOM/PANCAP strategies;*

9. Commit to the adoption education workplace policies guided by the ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work and the ILO/UNESCO HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean;

10. Pledge to provide leadership for planning and implementation of national and regional sectoral responses and to facilitate accelerated access to resources from funds allocated for both education sector development and HIV and AIDS response;

11. Commit to the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in educational systems through leadership, policy, legislation, regulations and research, and in this regard, support the Champions for Change programme initiated by PANCAAP;

12. Affirm the rights of people affected by and infected with HIV and promote their meaningful involvement in the education sector at all levels, including policy design and implementation;

13. Request the CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to develop a mechanism for accelerating implementation of GIPA principles in the regional response;

14. Endorse the development of professional and scholarly approaches to effective school health with urgent emphasis on HIV through training and research in selected regional institutions

15. Commit to professionalising the fields of HFLE, school health and sex education with attention to HIV and AIDS, to ensure timely, universal coverage and the development of career paths in those fields;

16. Commit to extending and deepening the coverage and professional development of educators to implement HFLE and HIV and AIDS education programmes;

17. Endorse the establishment and support development of the Caribbean Network of HIV Coordinators in the education sector as a CARICOM-led regional resource;

18. Request the Network of HIV Coordinators to develop a model for partnership between Ministries of Education and national organisations of PLWHA, consistent with the GIPA principles;

19. Request the PANCAAP to develop a regional strategic framework for the education sector response in the overall regional response to HIV and AIDS;

20. Request the CARJCOM Secretariat to establish a network and consultative mechanism among development partners to increase efficiency and effectiveness of their contribution to the regional and national strategic plans for HIV and AIDS and education, and to collaborate in the development of policies and the sharing of information and knowledge;

21. Agree to the inclusion of the education sector in the priorities identified in the review of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS to be undertaken by PANCAAP in 2006, recognizing that the education sector response to HIV and AIDS also provides an opportunity to address other significant health and life style issues, with special emphasis on prevention;

22. Agree to engage with CAPNET to develop national and regional publishing projects to ensure provision of quality and culturally sensitive instructional materials to support universal coverage of HIV and AIDS education and to infuse HIV and AIDS principles into new instructional materials;

23. Recognise the importance of mainstreaming gender in all materials and methodologies used to address education with regard to HIV and AIDS

24. Recommend that Ministers of Education continue to advocate for appropriate attention to HIV and AIDS issues and keep the HIV and AIDS high on the agendas of COHSCD and national parliaments;

25. Also call on all stakeholders to advocate for, and contribute to the mobilization of resources in support of the national and regional programmes that would advance the role of education in the accelerated approach to HIV and AIDS;

26. Request the Chair of COHSCD to ensure that the issues related to Education and HIV and AIDS are brought to the attention of Heads of Government for their endorsement and support

27. Recommend that targets established in the Regional and National Strategic plans for Education and HIV and AIDS be aligned with those established by the national, sub-regional and regional consultations for HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and the UNGASS targets for 2006 – 2010;

28. Ensure access to educational opportunities at all levels for children in vulnerable settings and conditions with emphasis on those affected or infected by HIV and AIDS;

29. Request of the Caribbean Examinations Council that all appropriate syllabuses and assessment procedures for the three levels of secondary examination be urgently reviewed to ensure that knowledge and skills that will contribute to the education sector response to HIV and AIDS are included.