

LEADERS TO CARIBBEAN: HIV/AIDS POSES "SINGLE GREATEST THREAT" TO THE REGION'S SECURITY

At the 5th Caribbean Chiefs of Mission Conference on HIV/AIDS in Bridgetown, Barbados on September 26-27, Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in Barbados, had a dire message. She warned attendees that HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean "poses the single greatest threat to region's security." Statistically, the Caribbean is the second-most affected region by HIV/AIDS, behind only sub-Saharan Africa. In May 2006, a UNAIDS report found that AIDS-related illness is the leading cause of death for people ages 15-44 across the Caribbean, with 330,000 HIV-positive people as of the end of 2005. In 2005, some 37,000 people in the Caribbean contracted HIV. Those alarming statistics are the immediately visible part of the problem. But the HIV/AIDS problem in the region is no longer just something for doctors to deal with, says Symmonds. With discussions about HIV/AIDS primarily focusing on it as a purely public health crisis, its increasing effects elsewhere are being overlooked. Symmonds specifically pointed to the threat that the disease poses to the stability of economies and labor forces of the Caribbean as people living with the disease are forced to take much time off or even stop working all together due to illness. [1]

WORLD AIDS DAY INFORMATION

Since 1988, December 1 has been recognized globally as World AIDS Day. Although the fight against HIV/AIDS carries on throughout the year, World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people across the world to unite in their mutual goals of increasing awareness, fighting prejudice, and promoting AIDS education. This year's theme is "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise," reminding governments and policy makers to make good on promises they've made to help fight the disease.

While the day is recognized all over the world, some of the most important activities are local in nature. Because of their reach, the media are in a particularly good position to promote the ideals of World AIDS Day. We hope that your company chooses to participate in some way. We look forward to reporting on your event in our next package. Please send information to: efrenkel@kff.org.

RESOURCES: [1] <http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/wadcd2006/en/day.html>, [2] <http://www.avert.org/worldaid.htm>, [3] <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/index.cfm>

[CONTINUED... FROM COVER STORY, PAGE 1.]

POSSIBLE ANGLES:

- 1) Set up an interview with the U.S. ambassador to your country. Find out what his or her Mission and the U.S. government are doing currently to address the local HIV/AIDS problem. What are the Mission's future plans to fight HIV/AIDS in your country?
- 2) Following President Clinton's assertion that "governments alone can't move us from inequality to equal opportunity...", identify some of the non-governmental players that are working towards that goal in your area. What are they doing? How can your audience get involved with them?

RESOURCES:

- [1] http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm
- [2] http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/columns/html/20060923t170000-0500_113216_obs_caribbean_media_failing_the_integration_process_.asp

POSSIBLE ANGLES:

- 1) Interview officials at your local Ministries of Health and Economy, as well as a member of the business community, to discuss the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS in your country. How has HIV/AIDS impacted your country's labor force? Investment climate?
- 2) Is there one area of the labor market in your country that has been disproportionately affected by the disease? Why? Interview a professional in this field to discuss the affect of the disease on the labor force.
- 3) Given the negative effect that the disease could have on economies in the Caribbean, could HIV/AIDS become a significant factor in the unification of those economies under the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)? [For commentary on the media's role in the CSME, read the Jamaica Observer article about Harold Hoyte's talk at the 4th biennial Excellence in Media Lecture. [2]]

RESOURCES:

- [1] Clinton Global Initiative [<http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org>]
- [2] <http://www.cbc.bb>
- [3] Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator [<http://www.state.gov/s/gac/>]



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UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

December 1
World AIDS Day

For more information and WAD resources, see Page 4.

December 8-9, 2006

Champions for Change III

Accelerating the Media's role in Reducing HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination, Barbados.

For more information, contact the PANCAP Secretariat at: Tel: +592 223 5028 / 226 4148 or online at www.pancap.org

January 23-24, 2007

CBMP Radio Broadcasters' Workshop on HIV/AIDS, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

With featured presenters, Joe Richman and Thembi Ngubane of NPR's "Thembi's AIDS Diary", the CBMP will train some 30 radio programmers from across the region to use radio diaries and other creative formats to promote understanding of HIV/AIDS.

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE ADDRESSES INEQUALITY IN GLOBAL HEALTH; 5TH CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE ON HIV/AIDS HEARS FROM CBMP

In an effort to address some of the world's most pressing problems, including HIV/AIDS, former U.S. President Bill Clinton convened more than 1,000 heads of state, celebrities, non-profit and private-sector leaders, and health professionals in New York City, September 20 – 22, 2006, for the second annual Clinton Global Initiative. This year's event generated 215 commitments – worth more than US\$7 billion – to support the conference's main themes of Poverty Alleviation, Energy and Climate Change, Mitigating Religious and Ethnic Conflict, and Global Health. While the commitments varied in size and scope, the impetus for most was the need to create a more just and equitable world.

"Almost every commitment in some way or another seeks to reduce the impact of inequality, which we know is staggering, across the globe and even within developing countries," Clinton said in his closing remarks. "The reason that we started this whole thing is that the world is unequal, unstable, and unsustainable; that governments alone can't move us from inequality to equal opportunity, from instability to shared responsibility, from unsustainability to integrated communities where we live in harmony with nature and each other; and that all of us can do it." [1]

During the conference, Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation General Manager and CBMP Steering Committee Chairwoman Dr. Allyson Leacock and Kaiser Family Foundation President Dr. Drew Altman both had the opportunity to speak separately with Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, about the need for an expanded media response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. As a result, Ambassador Dybul invited Dr. Leacock to deliver a 30-minute presentation to the more than 20 U.S. ambassadors attending the 5th Caribbean Chiefs of Mission Conference on HIV/AIDS, which was held in Bridgetown, Barbados on September 26-27. [2] During her presentation, Dr. Leacock updated the ambassadors and other relevant officials about the objectives and plans of the CBMP, conveyed the broadcasters' eagerness to work with local health ministries, and expressed that the CBMP is a strong example of an effective U.S.-Caribbean partnership involving major U.S. foundations and media companies in the Caribbean.

See PAGE 4 for POSSIBLE ANGLES and RESOURCES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: For access to the Kaiser Family Foundation's policy research, analyses, reports and fact sheets, and media partnerships, visit the Foundation's main website at <http://www.kff.org>. For more information about reporting on HIV/AIDS, including relevant facts and figures, visit <http://www.globalhealthreporting.org/diseaseinfo.asp?id=23>.



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CARIBBEAN TOURISM AND MEDIA URGED TO JOIN TOGETHER IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS

Dr. Carol Jacobs, Chair of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, recently called on the Caribbean tourism industry to help in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"In a region which boasts of 40 million tourists passing through...annually, the tourism sector must see itself as having a critical role in sensitizing those who work in the industry, as well as those who travel for pleasure or for work," said Jacobs.[1]

Her words came as St. Lucia prepared for the 9th Caribbean Media Exchange Conference on Sustainable Tourism (CMEx), which was held October 12-16, 2006, in St. Lucia. The event brought together media, tourism, and development officials to discuss issues facing their industries, including the "controversial connections between tourism and HIV/AIDS" in the Caribbean. The conference also focused on innovative communications strategies.[1] [2]

Dr. Jacobs, who also chairs the Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission, applauded the group for its willingness to see the connection between the media, tourism, and HIV/AIDS. "I am grateful that CMEx has once again chosen to focus some attention on the issues around HIV/AIDS. The media's role in using communication strategies to reach the various vulnerable groups regionally will help mitigate the impact of the AIDS epidemic and will ultimately contribute to the sustainability of our regional tourism product." [3]

A roundtable discussion called "HIV/AIDS and Behaviour Change Communications," moderated by Marilyn Sealy, Public Relations/Liaison Officer for the Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission, and David Singh, Chairman & CEO of the Destiny Group of Companies, focused on developing a holistic approach to the problem. The group resolved to bring attention to "sex tourism" and to expose HIV/AIDS as more than just a public health problem. The discussion also promoted collaboration among churches, businesses, and the health, tourism, and education ministries in preventive efforts.[4]

BELIZE TO TRAIN 200 PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH HIV/AIDS

In an effort to better prepare health care professionals in Belize, the country's Ministry of Health and the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), with funding from the European Union, launched a training campaign on October 12 entitled "Implementation Plan for the Execution of Human Capacity Building in Belize to Scale up HIV/AIDS Prevention." The program will train at least 200 people over 12 months with the objective of "building human capacity at all levels." The program has a budget of more than US\$270,000.

According to Belize's Director of Health Services, Dr. Jorge Polanco, the program will update health care professionals about the advancements in drug therapies and how to incorporate them into their work. The program will also train professionals in a number of other fields to address the secondary effects of the disease, such as stigma and discrimination. Resources: [1] <http://www.lovefm.com>, [2] <http://www.health.gov.bz/Departments/epidemiology/hiv-aids.html>

RESOURCES:

- [1] <http://www.mycaribbeannews.com/news3/0609251.htm>
- [2] <http://www.caribbean360.com>
- [3] <http://sunstkitts.com>
- [4] <http://www.caribbeanmediaexchange.com>

POSSIBLE ANGLES:

- 1) *Has the tourism industry in your country addressed the issue of HIV/AIDS? If so, does it have any examples of an innovative response to HIV/AIDS?*
- 2) *Are local tourism venues (i.e. hotels, airlines, etc.) engaged in raising awareness or providing HIV/AIDS prevention information? What are the main drivers of the "controversial connections between tourism and HIV/AIDS" in your country?*
- 3) *Interview a local participant from the CMEx to broadcast the outcomes from the event and to better understand potential local, national, and/or regional follow-up activities.*

POSSIBLE ANGLES:

- 1) *What are some of the main health care workforce issues in your country? If there are shortages, where are they most acute and for what kinds of healthcare workers?*
- 2) *What is your country's health ministry doing to make sure local health care workers are appropriately trained to treat people living with HIV/AIDS?*
- 3) *How can the media advocate for better professional training for health care workers?*

REGIONAL HIV/AIDS AWARENESS ACTIVITIES LAUNCHED WITH FOCUS ON TESTING, STIGMA, AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE

A number of high-profile activities in the Caribbean were launched in September and October with the goal of raising awareness about HIV/AIDS.

BARBADOS

Several groups co-sponsored National AIDS Awareness Week from October 15-21. The Week was promoted with the slogan "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise – Don't Turn Your Back on AIDS!" The primary goal of the campaign was to eliminate the stigma associated with people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The Awareness Week included workshops for employers hosted by the International Labour Organization, the Ministry of Labour, and the AIDS Foundation of Barbados. There were also panel discussions, a 6k run/walk, and a children's movie night.[1]

Furthering the anti-stigma message on October 7, the musical group Jabae held its Pledge for Life Concert at Barbados' Desmond Haynes sports complex, where entertainers and politicians joined community members to publicly commit themselves to the cause of fighting the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. [3]

Two Barbadian films dealing with HIV/AIDS are set to premiere in time for World AIDS Day. The first, a film called *Hurt people, hurt people* by Ian Douglas of the Barbados National Cultural Foundation, raises awareness about stigma and will debut on November 10.[1] *The Final Truth*, a film adapted from the 2002 play, traces the history of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the dangers associated with it. It will premiere on December 1, World AIDS Day. [4]

JAMAICA

The National AIDS Committee (NAC) has intensified its campaign to ensure that at least 10,000 people get voluntarily tested before World AIDS Day, December 1. The Committee's strategy has been to connect testing efforts to regularly scheduled events, such as the National Youth Service's health fairs. "Rather than make it into a standard health fair, we appended it to have free HIV counseling and testing, whereby persons who visit the health fair would take advantage of voluntary testing," explained the NAC Acting Executive Director, Vivian Gray. With the initial positive response to the initiative, Gray is optimistic. "It is more than likely we will have more than the 10,000 [tested]."[5]

DOMINICA

In Roseau, the National AIDS Coordinating Unit, with the Dominica Festivals Commission and Scotia Bank, stepped up its campaign to "limit wanton sex practices, most common during festive seasons" during the World Creole Music Festival from October 27-29, in Dominica. Says NACU Coordinator, Julie Frampton, "Whether we want to accept it or not, persons do have flings on times like these. We need to be able to ensure that we keep our people HIV-free; provide the environment that will remind them that whatever you do, you need to live with the consequences..."[6]

Visit the CBMP website at <http://www.broadcasthivcarib.org> for more information on the Partnership, fast facts on HIV/AIDS in the region, global HIV/AIDS headlines from kaisernetwork.org, and more!

RESOURCES

- [1] <http://news.caribseek.com/Barbados.shtml>
- [2] <http://www.cbc.bb/www.cbc.bb/content/view/7563/10/>
- [3] <http://www.cbc.bb/content/view/7738/10/>
- [4] <http://www.cbc.bb/content/view/7576/10/>
- [5] <http://www.jamaica-observer.com/news>
- [6] <http://www.caribbenetnews.com>; <http://www.festivalmusicquecreoledominique.com>

POSSIBLE ANGLES:

- 1) *Follow up with NAC in Jamaica [tel: 876) 967-1100/1103/1105/1107] to learn the results of this campaign. Is a similar campaign in your country viable?*
- 2) *What, if any, local or national awareness-raising activities are being held in your country? If such events have occurred in your area, have they been successful? Why?*
- 3) *Work with the leadership of your broadcasting company to sponsor a popular concert or other media event to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.*
- 4) *Increasing voluntary testing is one of the goals for many of these events. Does your local HIV/AIDS commission or health ministry include counseling services along with testing? What is the current status of HIV treatment in your country? If, for example, more people learn that they are HIV positive as a result of testing campaigns, will they be able to get the treatment they need?*