

Building a Faith-Based Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean

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implemented by the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)**

Background

The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) is engaged in a collaborative relationship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in the implementation of a three-year regional HIV/AIDS Project entitled: “Building a Faith Based Response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean”. The goal of the project is to mobilize and enhance the response of Caribbean Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Through this project the CCC seeks to facilitate the formation of a strategic alliance among Caribbean FBOs to combat HIV/AIDS. The countries engaged in the project are Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

Aspects of the project include: Baseline Study and assessment of existing FBO HIV/AIDS initiatives in each of the fourteen target countries, workshops to educate Caribbean Clergy and lay persons on HIV/AIDS issues, establishment of home based care models in selected countries; creation of a seed fund to support FBO work in HIV/AIDS and the development of the Guidelines for the preparation of Policies and Action Plans to deal with HIV/AIDS.

The draft Policy and Action Plan Document entitled, “Guidelines for Caribbean Faith-Based Organisations in Developing Policies and Action Plans to deal with HIV/AIDS”, was presented to 83 participants from faith based organisations throughout the fourteen Caribbean countries. The Consultation was held at the Umana Yana, Georgetown, Guyana during the period January 17-19, 2005.

Participants in their debate agreed that there was the need for broader engagement on issues related to HIV/AIDS by religious leaders and theologians and that collaboration among leaders of all Faith-Based Organisations needs to take place.