

CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR THE CARIBBEAN REGION IN THE LAC CONSTITUENCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW GLOBAL FUND STRATEGY

The Situation:

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a catastrophic impact on the most vulnerable communities worldwide and threatens progress against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. The pandemic could overwhelm health systems across the world and cause disruptions by preventing access to treatment and medical supplies. Many Caribbean countries are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and are vulnerable and lack sufficient resilience to deal with any added shocks. Even in a favorable scenario where the region manages to control the spread of the virus and the outbreaks remain localized, the economic impact of the pandemic is likely to be significant.

The development of a New Global Fund Strategy must take into consideration these peculiarities for the Caribbean Region. Despite the region making significant public health strides, there remain gaps in the regional HIV response and the response to TB and Malaria in some countries.

The region will not meet the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets at the end of 2020. However, the Caribbean Region continue to demonstrate progress in the HIV response. Progress has been made in reducing new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, with the incidence: prevalence ratio of the region decreasing steadily from 6.0% in 2010 to 3.9% in 2019.

Great strides continue to be made in the Caribbean towards the elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmission, with seven countries achieving revalidation. More than 90% of pregnant women living with HIV knew their status in five of the nine countries in the region that reported 2019 data to UNAIDS.

Progress across the testing and treatment cascade has slowed, highlighting the need to expand proven methods of active case finding and linkage to (and retention in) care, including through community-based programmes. Roll-out of comprehensive prevention interventions is also incomplete in the region.

An ongoing challenge for HIV responses in the region is high levels of migration that place health-care systems, education systems and labour markets under pressure. Government health systems are also struggling to absorb programmes that are traditionally funded by international donors, including HIV prevention and key population-focused initiatives. Innovative financing strategies are needed to ensure sustained progress.

Key Populations continue to be the core of the epidemic. Key Populations and their sexual partners account for 60% of new HIV infections in the Region. 57% of new infections in the Region are among men, and 26% are among gay men and other men who have sex with men.

The Current Global Fund Strategy:

The current Global Fund Strategy 2017-2022 looks at four key areas:

1. Maximize impact against HIV, TB and malaria
2. Build Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health
3. Promote and Protect Human Rights and Gender Equality
4. Mobilize Increased Resources

These areas are critical to the reduction of these diseases in the Region and to serve as key enablers towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG-3 for the elimination of these communicable diseases. The Global Fund contribution to the Region especially to the HIV response has been significant as many countries relied heavily on this external support to augment national support to strengthen the delivery of services by mounting an effective response.

The development of the new strategy should take into consideration the challenges faced by the Region, the current epidemiological situation and the national and regional developmental agenda for the Caribbean Region. It must also align with International development goals such as the SDGs.

The four overarching broad strategic objectives from the 2017-2022 strategy remain relevant for the region. The region must push to end AIDS, Malaria and TB. Health systems must be strengthened not only to respond to these communicable diseases but taking into consideration the rising burden of Non-communicable Diseases and the impact of climate change on the region and on health systems. Many social barriers still exist, and the regional response must be grounded in a Human Rights based approach. For example, women and girls are subjected to poor access to healthcare and education, limited empowerment, representation and opportunities to contribute to decision making with partners, family members and communities. Issues such as gender-based violence, harmful cultural norms, stigma & discrimination put them at increasing risks.

Addressing the needs of Key Population is also critically important. Access to care in most of our countries is hindered by several factors including criminalization of same-sex relationships, hostile communities, homophobic discrimination and violence, external and internal stigma, and limited health education.

In terms of resource mobilization, it is critically important that countries sustain health gains and increase investments in national response as external funders continue to pull out of the region.

In the development of a consultation process for the next Global Fund strategy, the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) will work with countries, Civil Society Organizations and other partners through a broad consultative process to examine the relevance of the four strategic areas and to identify what can the GF do to ensure that they deliver effectively at the global level but also to the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Constituency. The consultation process must address all levels ranging from communities to

the political levels and make recommendations to the Global Fund for improvements so that the new strategy can serve as a catalyst to enable the region to push towards ending AIDS and the elimination of Malaria and TB by 2030 and beyond.

The following activities have been proposed to support the consultation process.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

1. Identification of a Consultant to support the process: 20-24 July 2020.
2. Call to join the Steering Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean: from 27 July 2020.
3. Survey Design to collect feedback from stakeholders: August 3-7, 2020.
4. LAC Steering Committee Meeting: 14 August 2020.
5. Validation of the survey by the Steering Committee for LAC: 14 August 2020.
6. Webinars for presentation of the consultation process: 17-21 August 2020.
7. Survey launch: August 21, 2020.
8. Implementation of the survey: August 21 to August 31, 2020.
9. Interviews with key actors: 3-31 August 2020.
10. Analysis and systematization of survey and interview results: 1-11 September 2020.
11. Presentation for validation of results with the Steering Committee: September 14 2020
12. Finalization of Report from the Caribbean Region to the LAC Constituency for the GF Secretary on behalf of the Latin American Country Office: September 18, 2020.