

**REMARKS DELIVERED TO THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE  
AIDS FOUNDATION OF BARBADOS  
*CHARTER ON HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE  
WORKPLACE IN BARBADOS,*  
(Accra Beach Resort, Wednesday, 1 December, 2010)**

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First let me thank the Aids Foundation of Barbados for having extended the invitation to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB), to attend and participate in today's launch of the Charter on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights in the Workplace.

The Foundation must be congratulated on the work it has done and continues to do. The charter which is being launched today, focuses on the issue of stigmatization and discrimination. This achievement speaks volumes for the work of the Foundation, as it serves to demonstrate in no uncertain way, its commitment to the realization of its vision.

This vision to which I refer, is directed at the implementation of workplace policies and programmes that focus on behaviour

change, reducing stigma and discrimination and creating supportive environments for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

CTUSAB is pleased to give support to this initiative, as it recognizes that it is directed at ensuring that employers commit to observing and respecting the constitutional and human rights of workers.

The Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados holds the fundamental position that workers should not have their employment terminated, be laid off or placed on suspension whether with or without pay, or to be denied renewal of their contracts of employment, or to be subjected to any adverse action affecting their terms and conditions of employment, solely on the basis of any positive response to any test for the immunodeficiency virus or immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) antibody, or on the basis of having been diagnose with HIV/AIDS.

CTUSAB denounces discrimination in any form against persons living with HIV/AIDS, as it strongly believes that persons with the disease should be ensured fair and equitable treatment, allowed

equal access to all civil and human rights, and all other rights guaranteed under the laws of Barbados.

It is to be noted that the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace has not escaped the attention of the social partners, as Government, Labour and the Private Sector have already approved a Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and other Life Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace. This document can be found in Protocol V.

Under the Code of Practice it is recommended that:

“The Code of Practice should be rooted in a philosophy which recognizes that employees with HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illness, if not affected with a significant disability, have the potential for a productive life and that the continuance in normal pursuits, including work, provides for the security of established routines, established expectations and opportunities for positive social interaction and may either have therapeutic importance in the remission or recovery process, or help to prolong their life, and which in its implementation seeks inter alia, to:

- Treat all employees with HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses with respect and dignity.”

With specific reference to the subject of discrimination, the code states that ‘employers ought not to undertake to discriminate against any employee with HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness, and to should seek to protect their entitlements in the workplace with respect to job applications, hiring, upgrading, advancement, promotion, discharge, discipline, layoffs, privileges of employment, compensation, training or other terms and conditions of employment.’

The Congress urges all employers to respect the fundamental rights of work, and see it as their responsibility to practice non-discrimination, and moreover, to observe the ILO principles of social justice and equality, as well as decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and dignity.

As alluded to earlier, the focus of today’s event is that of the launch of the Charter on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights in the Workplace in Barbados, which is intended to attract the attention of employers.

Be that as it may, I hasten to caution that employees in the main that they too should be mindful of their responsibility not to practice acts of discrimination against their work colleagues.

I take this opportunity to remind you that under the Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and other Life threatening illnesses in the Workplace as approved by the Social Partners, employees are reminded of their responsibility, "to ensure that respect and dignity to be shown to co-workers is not adversely affected by the knowledge that the co-worker is suffering from HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness."

Chairperson, CTUSAB welcomes and looks forward to continuing the working relationship that it has established with the Aids Foundation of Barbados. It would seem that we can safely say that the next item on our agenda, would be that of creating an HIV/ AIDS Charter on Workplace Behaviour for Employees.

Presented by:

**DENNIS DEPEIZA,**

General Secretary, CTUSAB

December 1, 2010

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