GUIDELINES FOR CARIBBEAN FAITH – BASED ORGANISATIONS IN DEVELOPING POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS TO DEAL WITH HIV/AIDS

Regarding Policy for Local Congregations/Devotees

Faith based organizations in general promote a number of universal values. Among these are:-

FBOs are hereby encouraged to affirm and promote these values, within the context of their unique belief system, in order to reduce the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the quality of life of their members, and on Caribbean societies as a whole. Other social sectors have joined openly in the struggle, but the contribution of FBOs which often have special leadership advantages in communities, could amplify an inter-sectoral approach to the epidemic. Given the rapid spread of the epidemic across the Caribbean, there is an urgent call for action, but beyond the call, there is a demand to break the silence surrounding HIV/AIDS, to remove attitudes of condemnatory judgment, negative discrimination and/or indifference towards PLWHA and their families, and to pledge to save lives of the present generation, while preventing the annihilation of future generations across the Caribbean.
FBOs by their very nature are well placed to spur the involvement of their members to engage as follows:

• To commit at leadership and other levels in order to stay informed about the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

• To cooperate with other organizations and individuals involved with the issue of HIV/AIDS in order to strengthen the response.

• To lift their voices against stigma and discrimination in order to break down barriers between people.

• To communicate appropriate messages about prevention of HIV/AIDS and about care, support and treatment of PLWHA within and outside their constituencies nationally, regionally and internationally.

• To engage the emerging theological and educational developments at a time when HIV/AIDS is an imminent threat to all.

• To be actively involved in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and in the care, support and treatment of PLWHA.

• To give support to Governmental and non-Governmental agencies that are involved in efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS and in providing care, support and treatment to PLWHA.

• To constantly reflect on the moral, spiritual and ethical issues raised by the pandemic, to interpret these issues in their local context and to offer guidance to those confronted by difficult choices at personal and programmatic levels.

• To maintain relevant awareness, dialogue and discussion on the issue of HIV/AIDS.