Call to Action for Access to Quality HIV related Diagnostics as a Human Rights Entitlement of Residents of the Caribbean Region

We, the National HIV Programme Managers and Laboratory Managers of countries in the Caribbean Region, in collaboration with CARPHA, PANCAP, CDC/PEPFAR, WHO/PAHO, UNAIDS and other partners, at the meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 20th-23rd October, 2014 to review HIV care and treatment targets and discuss ways to improve access and quality of HIV-related point of care testing (POCT):

Recognize that the Caribbean Region initiated discussions on the new UNAIDS targets (90-90-90), to lay the groundwork to end the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2020.

Recognize that in order to break through existing barriers to effective use of HIV related diagnostics and to accelerate the end of AIDS, the UNAIDS and other partners recently joined forces to spearhead the launch of the Diagnostics Access Initiative, that optimizes the use of innovative laboratory diagnostic tools and strategies, as critical to achieving the first and third targets.

Recognize that lack of quality assured laboratory diagnostics can continue to undermine public health, thus impacting human and social rights.

Recognize that although countries in the Caribbean Region have made tremendous progress in improving access and quality of HIV testing to meet treatment targets, there are still significant gaps to be filled, particularly in the area of quality diagnostics to meet the targets.

Acknowledge that the recently developed UNAIDS, CDC/PEPFAR and WHO/PAHO documents titled ‘Framework for Development of Policy for implementing Quality-Assured POCT’ and ‘Guidance for improving the Quality of HIV-related POCT’ will help to address the gaps.
Resolve to revise and adapt the above mentioned documents to the Caribbean context.

Resolve to create a Caribbean Technical Working Group (TWG) on Access and Quality of HIV-related POCT to facilitate the implementation of these documents and mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data to inform progress towards achieving the targets.

Call for countries to allocate resources for improved access to quality assured HIV-related POCT to achieve consistently accurate and reliable patient test results to meet the 90-90-90 targets.

Call for countries to acknowledge that ensuring access to high quality HIV-related testing is a human right for all residents in the Caribbean Region and will yield tremendous public health benefits.