

**Press Conference:  
Mobilizing Media Leadership in the Caribbean  
XVI International AIDS Conference  
August 16, 2006**

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**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I'd like to call this press conference to order, as it were. My name is Allyson Leacock. I'm the general manager of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation in Barbados and the chair of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV and AIDS. I'd like to thank all of you for coming and joining us this afternoon to announce an important initiative to tackle HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean.

But before we begin, it is my pleasure to introduce the panel. On my far right is Matt James, a senior vice president for media and public education at the Kaiser Family Foundation. Just beside me, I'm sure many of you know him already, Dr. Jacob Gayle, who is a deputy vice president for the Global HIV AIDS Initiative at the Ford Foundation. To my far left, Sir George Alleyne, the United Nations secretary general's special envoy for HIV and AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean. And to my immediate left, Scott Campbell, the executive director of the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

So, I want to welcome the panel for joining us and welcome you for joining us this afternoon.

We are all here at this international conference because HIV and AIDS matters to each of us. In the Caribbean, it is our most pressing challenge. The rates of new infection are increasing in timing in nearly every

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country in the region. Stigma and homophobia are discouraging open discussion and fostering secrecy. AIDS is now the leading cause of death among adults in the Caribbean between the ages of 15 and 44. That has the potential to decimate not just our people, but our economies as small island states. A number of initiatives have been ongoing by many soldiers in the region for a long time and if you permit me to acknowledge the presence of Joan [Inaudible] and the Assistant Secretary General of Caracao, Mr. Eddie Green. Along with the care professionals and those throughout the region who have been working to raise awareness in the region on the issue of HIV and AIDS.

I'm pleased to announce this afternoon that the creation of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV and AIDS is a new effort, I believe, among media professionals and broadcasters in the region in particular to use our communication platforms to cover and to advance the sight against HIV and AIDS. As chair of this new regional partnership, I'd like you to join me in celebrating what I think are some key elements and initiatives that have been significant in the new commitments of support from those who are here one the platform with me this afternoon.

All of these organizations have joined with the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership. In May of this year, we had two exciting days in Bridgetown, Barbados, when we

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launched the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership. We had 30 television and radio media executives from 20 Caribbean countries joining us for a singular distinction for a regional summit of media executives and how we, as members of the media could tackle the HIV and AIDS dilemma. It was organized by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, with tremendous assistance and help and guidance from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The summit resulted in the creation of this partnership where we as broadcasters signed on a commitment to make HIV and AIDS a business and core priority for our entities. In the declaration that we signed creating the partnership, we agreed to integrate HIV/AIDS communication across all of our programs' genres to provide dedicated and substantial broadcast time to HIV/AIDS programming, as well as messaging and to share our resources and programming in an effort to extend the existing HIV and AIDS messaging across the region.

We have had a number of opportunities to work with [Inaudible] in sharing information. We have a regional program that is aired every World AIDS Day across the region. But the establishment of this partnership is incredibly exciting because it is being led by those of us in the broadcast movement. I believe it is the first time that broadcasters in our region have come together as part of a collaborative effort to stem a major social problem. It is

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so unique because the media partners themselves are the ones who are going to be developing the campaign. We have been used and our media houses have been used as vehicles to share information. But we are this time involved in the creation of the message and we have already witnessed some very exciting and promising results. We've made a pledge to dedicate significant programming assets – up to 12 minutes a day, including during prime time, and that is a major, major concession for us to target HIV and AIDS messages and that, in my view, is really unprecedented. We are coordinating it across the region to insure that each broadcaster dedicates 12 minutes a day as a start.

Having been on the panel discussion with [Inaudible] from South Africa, however, where they've allocated 5-percent of their airtime, that will be our goal. We've already begun distributing among our broadcasters quarterly HIV and AIDS programming with packages that include materials, information, specialized programs all about HIV and AIDS. And the CDC, which I'm in charge of in Barbados as well as all of my colleagues in the region, we've begun airing those programs and those messages since June of this year. We've created a partnership website at [www.broadcasthiv\[inaudible\].org](http://www.broadcasthiv[inaudible].org) with the latest news and information about our work. We're planning a series of programming workshops for writers, producers, radio and

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television programmers as well as technical workshops for journalists. And this is a very critical component because to date we have been exposed to a number of initiatives to sensitize the media, but the transfer of skills for our practitioners is going to be critical in sustaining the effort that we have embarked on with this partnership. So we are very, very pleased about that element as well.

And early next year, and I think those of us from the Caribbean know that next year is a signal year for us, we will be launching a new HIV and AIDS awareness campaign and a series of long-form programming developed especially for the Caribbean. And this is also significant. Our partnership does not mean that we are simply getting wholesale programs that were created somewhere else. This is an opportunity for us to create original culturally relevant programming for the Caribbean and that is important. Within the process of the training of our generous and our broadcasters and the programmers will be an opportunity to engage our communities, our actors, our writers in insuring that this product is really uniquely Caribbean and show that we've taken into account all of the variables and the idiosyncrasies of each of our territories in the Caribbean.

So I think that is certainly a significant step and that new campaign in 2007 will be designed obviously to leverage the prominence of the Caribbean will have on the

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world stage in hosting the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007. So we are very, very happy that we can use that as a benchmark and a launching pad, if you will, to share these substantial programming issues.

We have, to date, I think, as a region been very fortunate to have a number of public service announcements and a number of agencies including our national commissions disseminate information and public service announcements. What we've not been able to do in a consistent way is to have dedicated new programming constantly produced and this partnership and these partners on this stage have come together to make it possible for us as a Caribbean region, which is often subsumed under Latin America and lost in the fray. We are a distinct region that has some very unique issues that have to be addressed and because of the smallness of our territories, it is even more critical that we dedicate focused programming and messaging to reflect the unique issues that affect the Caribbean.

So, as broadcasters, we are going to be contributing our most valuable asset, our airtime and our broadcast expertise, to this very valuable effort. But we rely on partners as we did to, in fact, launch the summit, to help provide all of the public health expertise and the funds that would be necessary to create all of the specialized

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programming and the targeted messages that we perceive are so important for us in the region.

I am therefore very pleased to announce today, just four months after we launched that summit and this partnership, three major foundations have agreed to provide the technical expertise and the financial support that is necessary to make our work possible. The Kaiser Family Foundation, which helped us develop and launch the partnership, and you must forgive me if I single them out to say a very special thank you for their dedication, their commitment and their professionalism to this cause as partners for the Caribbean Broadcast partnership. They have certainly lent their support to us in a very meaningful way. They have been joined by two other entities who we want to say a personal thank you to for having the passion and the interest in the Caribbean to sign on to this initiative: The Ford Foundation and the Elton John AIDS Foundation, who will be providing \$1 million dollars in funding to support our work. I think you would want to join me in thanking them.

This will give us the necessary resources to immediately begin production of our new programming materials, our awareness campaign and the other initiatives that I just outlined to you. It's a historic collaboration between Caribbean broadcasters and major international partners. It's a major step forward, I think, of the

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Caribbean's battle against AIDS and I am certainly honored that I've had the opportunity as a media professional, but as a Caribbean citizen, to be part of this type of initiative because very often they say the media, in the media, "if it bleeds, it leads." And it's wonderful to be part of an exercise that is making a positive difference, is channeling a change for our societies in the region and this first step to an epidemic that really threatens our well being, our social fabric and our culture in the region.

This partnership with Ford and with the Elton John AIDS Foundation is significant. It's an exciting new prospect and I'm looking forward as chair of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Professionals to really make a difference with this exercise so thank you all and I want to certainly thank Ford and Elton John AIDS Foundation, but I also want to thank Kaiser and I think it's appropriate for me to hand over now to my good friend, Matt, who can give us some more perspective on Kaiser's work around the world in this type of enterprise, but certainly we are happy in the Caribbean that we are now part of that global movement.

**MATT JAMES:** Thank you, Allyson. I will be very brief and I'll skip a big public service announcement about Kaiser because I think some of you have heard an awful lot about Kaiser at this conference and those of you who want to

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learn more, certainly come up and talk to me. I'd be happy to tell you more about what we've done.

We have worked with a great many media partners around the world, in the United States, within TV and BET, Univision, Viacom and others in direct partnerships to increase the quality and the quantity of HIV/AIDS programming and storylines for quite some time now. We have indeed taken that to global perspectives and have big partnerships in Russia, in the Ukraine, in Africa, lots of work in India, but I don't think I've ever been as excited about any of the work that we've done so far as I am about what we're now doing in the Caribbean.

On May 8<sup>th</sup>, there really was a historic event in the Caribbean with the Caribbean media leaders summit and I think that it's just astounding how quickly the broadcasters in that region have moved so quickly to establish something that is real and is tangible and is going to bring a lot of new information to the Caribbean public about HIV/AIDS. It's important to note, by the way, that in these partnerships, it is not just public service announcements. This is not just a public service announcement that is going to show up at two in the morning when no one is watching. There certainly are public service announcements, but they will be targeted at the populations who are most at risk, trying to reach them with the information they need. And also, there will be

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long- and short-form programming, news and public affairs programming. New storylines will be developed into original programming, rights-free programming is going to be provided through BET, Univision and some of our other partners and so this is going to be a very, very broad campaign but is not just going to be limited to one form of communications and that's one of the things that makes this different. What we've learned through the years is if you reach young people in particular through many platforms, with lots of information and reinforcing messages, that is how you start to have an impact and we certainly, I think, are going to see this in the Caribbean broadcasting initiative.

Why media? Media, it makes so much sense because this is how you reach young people and this is how you get information across. So to be able to bring in new leadership at the top of media companies is absolutely critical and important. Kaiser brings to this not only funding, but also public health expertise and what's important about our new partners who are joining us together, I am going to sing in a moment, too, and join in. But what is important about the partners who are joining us today with Scott and Jacob joining us that we're getting more than just funding when Ford joins us and when Scott joins us. These are true partners who bring a lot of expertise in the world of AIDS and on the issue of AIDS. And so while it's great to have

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funding that comes along with this, that's absolutely critical to do the work that we do, to have true partners who understand HIV/AIDS and what needs to be done to fight the epidemic is just as important if not more important.

This is, and I think, a really good example of public private partnerships and how they can work together and indeed, how foundations can work together as private entities to make this happen and as my colleagues will tell you, foundations don't always work as well together as they should and so I'm really happy to have Jacob up here and Scott up here joining us in this effort.

Two final thoughts. First of all, let me thank Allyson so much for her leadership and what she has provided to this today. As I said, she has moved faster than most media executives that we've had to work with and we've had some really good ones, but she has moved faster than most. I have been able to travel around with her in Toronto this week and get to know her on a more personal basis, and I can tell you there is a real commitment there and these things won't work well unless you have the kind of committed leadership that Allyson has provided. So, thank you, Allyson, for what you have done and what you will do I know in the future.

And finally, you were kind enough to thank the remarkable Kaiser Family Foundation's staff, but let me add my own thanks there. I am truly blessed to work with some of

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the best colleagues that anyone can work with, who are both knowledgeable and have great expertise in what they do and are passionate about their work and I know that we could not carry out the work that we do without Tina, Penny, Jen, Steven, I'm going to miss some people, Meredith, other folks around the room. So, thank you so much for what you guys bring to this partnership also. I'm the guy that gets to stand up here and talk. They do a lot of the really hard work on the ground. With that, let me turn it back to you Allyson and again thank you for your leadership. Jacob and Scott, thank you so much for joining us in this and I know you're going to see great results the next time you check in on the Caribbean media partnership.

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Well, I think we're going to go straight to Jacob and hear from the Ford Foundation and their role in this partnership.

**JACOB GAYLE:** Thank you very, very much. I think this is on. Can you hear me? Okay, great. Thanks very much and I just wanted to say on behalf of the Ford Foundation, its global HIV initiative and, more particularly, its media, art and culture program that it has years of experience in working in this field, that it's a great privilege and pleasure to work with the Kaiser Foundation, along also with our partners in the Elton John AIDS Foundation in support of the Caribbean media initiative.

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Ford sees this as part of its partnership with Kaiser on the whole global media AIDS initiative that we'll probably hear a little bit more about at other times but in focusing specifically on the Caribbean. We see that it clearly plays an important role in part of the lives and communication in the region. I happen to also know that with the expert leadership of Dr. Leacock and her colleagues, that we've got a lot to see in the future and I'm glad that Ford will be able to partner in this venture.

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Thank you very much, Dr. Gayle. And I'm going to just keep going to the far left across the table and invite Scott Campbell from the Elton John AIDS Foundation to address us.

**SCOTT CAMPBELL:** Thank you. I'm very thrilled to be here on behalf of the Elton John AIDS Foundation and I don't want to repeat what everyone said about the Caribbean media partnership, but I have to say, having been there myself and being there in May, I've now seen four months later all this coming to fruition is really, it's real for us too and we at the Elton John AIDS Foundation are sort of a humble partner in all this but we're thrilled to be a part of it.

Just to let you know, our mission at the Elton John AIDS Foundation is to mobilize and distribute resources for HIV prevention, care and treatment, as well as efforts to

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eliminate factors that seal the HIV epidemic, including prejudice and discrimination.

And this project came sort of fortuitously for us because in this past year, we completed a strategic plan for our grant-making and developed several strategic priorities for funding. And it just happens that the Caribbean was one of these priorities. So, we're thrilled to participate with all of our partners on this panel and we hope that we can really make a difference. As everyone has thanked people here today, I have to sort of pause myself and say that certainly, as I said we are sort of humble partners in all of this and we really rely on real experts to help guide us and mentor us through our funding process.

And I really have to say a big thank you to Jacob Gayle, who was the one who really urged us to attend the conference in Barbados and Jacob has quickly become a great mentor and friend to the Elton John AIDS Foundation so we're very pleased with that. And I also have to say really, truly, I think, thank you to everyone at the Kaiser Foundation, but in particular, Jen Kates and Tina [Inaudible] because they're really compelling professionals and great partners and we're thrilled to be working with them as well.

And finally, just one more person to point out, I don't know if he's here, but I also wanted to point to and thank David Barrs, another leader in the Caribbean because we

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are as well supporting [inaudible] which is the collaborative fund for HIV treatment preparedness. And, again, is part of our priorities for funding. We're thrilled to be supporting his work in the Caribbean, which will award 10 to 15 grants to community organizations throughout the region and we think this will be a perfect compliment to our work with the broadcast media so that's sort of an ongoing thing.

There's no doubt a serious need for this work. We all know that AIDS is a problem in the Caribbean as it is throughout the world. There's no need for me to repeat the statistics. At this conference we'll hear plenty of talks and figures. We all know the many factors that contribute to the spread of HIV in all our countries, poverty and the lack of health services, the lack of awareness about HIV testing, treatment and prevention options and the stigma against people living with HIV and AIDS, homophobia, gender roles and other social factors that destroyed people from negotiating help. The world and we in this room have a collective responsibility to step forward and ask good questions about how to confront these problems.

For example - and this was very compelling for me, again, being down at that conference in Barbados - how do we stand in solidarity, for example, with the citizens of Haiti and their effort to combat poverty and constructive accountable and stable government that can provide health

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care and health promotion for all? How do we support individuals at high risk for HIV or AIDS - a drug user in Puerto Rico, a gay man in Jamaica, a Haitian migrant worker in the Dominican Republic, a sex worker in Trinidad - to claim their rights in access and negotiate for their health? And across the region, how do we contribute to change simply by sharing information, telling the stories and asking the questions?

Those of you in the media industry know, journalists, entertainment writers and broadcast producers, have a powerful role in society and in sharing knowledge about what works and telling the stories about what can and should be done. Through this Caribbean media partnership, an impressive group of broadcasters have created an opportunity for impact and change and again, we're thrilled to be part of it, so thank you very much.

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Thank you very much, Scott. And our final speaker on this round before we open the floor for questions gives me a personal sense of pride because he is a Barbadian, but he is here this afternoon in his role as the UN secretary general's special envoy on HIV and AIDS for Latin America and the Caribbean. Ladies and gentlemen, Sir George Alleyne.

**SIR GEORGE ALLEYNE:** Thank you very much. Whenever I speak mass at one of these things, I remember a similar

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occasion when a distinguished American public servant began his speech last by saying everything that can be said on this topic has been said already, but not everyone has said it and then proceeded to repeat what everyone had said. I'm not going to do that, at least only in part.

First of all, let me thank you for inviting me. And let me thank you for giving a few minutes to give, in a sense, my perspective on the epidemic in the Caribbean and my own take on the importance of the initiative. But before that also, let me thank Ford, my friend Jacob and let me thank Elton John Foundation and particularly the Kaiser Foundation, which I only got to know a couple months ago when Steven phoned me and asked me to attend the conference in May. Let me thank them all very warmly for agreeing to be partners with the Caribbean entity in this initiative.

And I am really quite thrilled that Kaiser accepted the role that the secretary general, the challenge of the secretary general throughout to mobilize the media in the fight against AIDS, so I'm appreciative with the role that the Kaiser Family Foundation has played. And also, although it's been said, I don't think too many words cannot be spoken about the initiative and the drive and the passion of Allyson Leacock who is sort of the midwife, if I may use a medical term, the midwife of this initiative. I admire her passion. As [inaudible], a German philosopher, said, "Without passion,

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nothing is ever achieved." And she objectifies this in spades, really, the passion to get something done.

The Caribbean has made really heroic efforts in this area. And if we start at the top, the prime ministers themselves have demonstrated their commitment to address this particular issue. They've demonstrated, this is an area which, if not addressed, will shake the very foundations of our society. And I only give two examples of how they've made this important. One, there's no better example of the importance in a country when you decide to borrow money for a project. And the prime ministers have decided to borrow money from international financial institutions in order to address the topic of HIV/AIDS.

And, secondly, they have decided to form a partnership to sponsor 10 Caribbean partnerships and [inaudible] Eddie Green is here today, decided to form this [inaudible] and bring together people who are of common interest and common mind and common focus to address the problem of AIDS in the Caribbean. And one of the reasons they've done this and supported it is not only because it is a good thing to do but because also there has been a tremendous movement in recent times back to the possibility of there being a closer connection within the Caribbean countries. Just recently, the Caribbean has [inaudible] government agreed that there should be Caribbean single

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market and economy. And within that single market and economy, we envision the free movement of people.

Let me talk of the free movement of people. You cannot speak of the free movement of people. You cannot speak of the free movement of people without the free movement of the diseases that people bring. So the Caribbean countries are very enthusiastic for any entity that addresses in a collective fashion the problem of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.

Over the past 20 years, as we in the Caribbean have agonized over the problem of AIDS - and my previous incarnation, I have another reason for doing this - over the past 20 years, we've agonized over the problem of AIDS, initially because there was nothing else we saw a lot of efforts in prevention. But as the treatment became increasingly available, there's been increasing attention to the number of persons given antiretroviral therapy. And one of the metrics of success in the Caribbean has been when [inaudible] countries there has been increase in the number of persons on the antiretroviral therapy.

But now there has been a very keen appreciation that if we continue to focus only on treatment, then the numbers of infected persons are increasing faster than the number of persons we can put on antiviral therapy. If we do not spend the same effort on prevention, we will always be behind. So

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that is another reason for increased emphasis and thrust in the Caribbean in prevention.

And for some time now, [inaudible] have agonized over what is the missing link for this bigger thrust in prevention. We have seen that most of our social partners have been engaged. The Caribbean has [inaudible] have said that in any major social initiative, these social partners should be involved: the public sector, the private sector, the media and the trade unions. We have wondered how it is that the media can be mobilized as an effective social partner in this effort.

And so then I was privileged in May to attend the meeting that was convened under the aegis of the Kaiser Family Foundation, which Allyson so ably chaired. We said at last we now have on board not only a broadcasting station, not only two broadcasting stations, but the Caribbean media as a whole being committed and involved in the fight against AIDS. And then we have analyzed - I've had a lot of occasions since May to analyze what role the media would play. And I was so pleased to hear my colleagues say, especially Allyson, there would not only be a set of talking heads saying thou shall, thou shall not, thou shalt not, there not be a set of talking heads doing that, the whole range of programming is used.

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And I've learned, I was instructed on Monday evening on the difference between planning and programming and how Oprah Winfrey and [inaudible] has 21 programmers. I don't know if you're going to have 21 programmers to rent for your program. But the difference between just having panel discussions and programming and the idea that this partnership is going to move out beyond just having talking heads, the whole range of programming to address the whole range of issues, a whole range of ages, there's not only the youth that have to be addressed, it's the older persons also that have to be addressed.

So I'm absolutely thrilled that the media and [inaudible] reason is all of us who are involved in this have appreciated that it is no good only dealing with the disease per se. One has to deal with those factors in the environment that make the disease also [inaudible] spread of the disease possible. And [inaudible] use [inaudible] terms one of those risks factors out there that make disease possible.

And it was mentioned before, the stigma, the discrimination, the homophobia. People get killed because they are supposed to be homosexual, the stigma, homophobia, that hasn't ventilated in a form that is not in your face, the form is not confrontational, that is educational and we see this partnership doing that kind of thing, presenting

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these issues and air in a format that will allow people of all ages to be engaged in rational debate about these issues in the Caribbean, so I really am very, very pleased to see this happening and I have tremendous expectations of it.

And if I might [inaudible] for a moment, and perhaps exceed my limit, enough to believe that the Caribbean is always in its history has tried to work together.

[Inaudible] times when we failed in coming together politically, we have found ways of coming together to do good things and I would like to hope that this initiative in the Caribbean, this union in the Caribbean, can have repercussion, have resonance in other parts of the world, demonstrate how small countries can come together to do great things for the health of their people. Thanks.

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** So you see why I have some personal pride. Thank you very much, Sir George. And the floor is now open for any questions or comments. I think we have the perfect example template, if you will, on real partnership with the individuals at this table and we are ready to move forward but we are also ready to hear any questions or comments you may have.

Yes, the gentleman at back. Please use the floor microphones so we can hear you clearly and record your questions.

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**XAVIER RODRIGUEZ:** Hi, my name is Xavier Rodriguez and I'm from [Inaudible] Puerto Rico. So I want to know, how will function the partnership, because we have in the Caribbean a Spanish country and then also Indian country. So how will function that you have been looking and thinking about that?

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Yes. I think the initial - we have to creep before we walk. So we're about at the walking stage right now. We have learned to start with the English speaking Caribbean, but there is an awareness and a desire to include certainly faces like Haiti and Puerto Rico, the [inaudible] because they are part of our region and the challenges of having materials in several languages is something that we will hope to address. But we will start of course with English, because of the [inaudible] the Dutch of course. So we will be looking at that, but we will start with English first. Thank you.

**RON [INAUDIBLE]:** Ron [Inaudible] with the [inaudible]. Just a quick question. That \$1 million dollars that you were referring to, is that U.S. dollars or-?

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** It is U.S. dollars and the \$1 million dollars was secured after the committee had devised a strategic plan and an action plan with specific tasks that we hope to do. So it was a submission of those tasks and the costings of each of those activities that the funds have been

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secured for. I wish I could say that the one million U.S. dollars is going to [inaudible] but it is clearly earmarked for specific activities that the committee had signed off on in developing its strategic plan.

**JACOB GAYLE:** If I could also just add to that just to say that that \$1 million dollars is just the beginning okay? So this is not \$1 million dollars for the entire life of our partnership. It's just to get it going. And I know that at least for my part and for Ford, we're looking forward to a long partnership.

**FEMALE SPEAKER 1:** My name is [Inaudible] I'm a freelance journalist, but this is for *Award* magazine and the Montreal Community Contact. I just wanted to know in the beginning stages, though, will there be future partnerships with newsprint? Particularly - and I'm thinking of the variety of tabloid newspapers that particularly address, I'm thinking of the Sunshine Girl and there's certain things that provide the perfect audience for the older community as well.

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Well, certainly within the Caribbean, I think there's potential for that expansion and we wanted to target the broadcast media because in reality we are conscious of the power of radio and television in getting our messaging out and it is my view and I think that the committee will certainly be looking at that, that ultimately we will have synergies with the print media. But this

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partnership has started out as a broadcast media partnership in the initial stages with, I believe, the possibility of it expanding or at least having the kinds of relationships or strategic alliances with the print media that will bolster the kind of information that we want to put out in radio and television.

**FEMALE SPEAKER 1:** If I could ask a quick second question. You had mentioned before that there's specific issues that are particular to the Caribbean around HIV and prevention. Do you, could you just go over what some of these issues are?

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** They're very much linked to stigma, discrimination and homophobia. We are a very religious society and reality is that there is a tendency to be judgmental about this disease and assume that it is linked to only lifestyles or to a certain sector of our communities. In my view, that is one of the biggest challenges that we face, apart from what we all know in the Caribbean as the tendency for us to be great lovers of each other and therefore the issue of recognizing that we have relationships that we need to manage in a way that obviously does not contribute to the spread of the disease. That within the Caribbean we need to have a sense of openness to discuss this issue.

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It is a real challenge because our societies are so small that there is the inclination to withdraw and conceal and when that is concealed, it means that you compromise our ability to treat the disease. So, in my view, one of the things we have to try to do building on the AIDS awareness messaging and the campaigns [Inaudible] for example has its Champions for Change, which I believe the third round is going to be launched in November this year looking at the media. These are a number of [inaudible] that we can use.

What we have to move to, I believe, is that paradigm shift between the awareness and the change of behavior. And that is a tall order. That is why the novel approaches to programming will be critical because the public service announcements people hear them, they know them, they may even be jaded in hearing them. So we know have to be innovative as media in making sure that we have and use different platforms of the media to reach different audiences so that testing will be one of the avenues that we can use. If we are involved in showing a cricket match that you can have subliminal messages either with the logo on the screen, we have to find soap operas that will have embedded messaging in it so that people are taking the message without feeling as if they're being preached at or scolded or judged in the process.

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I think those are very big issues for us in the region. And we need to have the open conversation, a lot of us have tried and I know that we continue to work with all of the professional agencies that have the inside track on persons living with AIDS, families of those people, how we respond to them, the kinds of support that they will need. And the power of the media was demonstrated quite effectively at our summit in May because we partnered with our national HIV/AIDS commission to announce and our ministry of health and one of the very valuable things about this partnership is that before we even launch the summit, the Kaiser Family Foundation visited Barbados and met with our ministry and all of our professionals working in the field so that there was not a case of well, we want to work with you on this and this is what we want to do. They said what is it you need, what are your issues? And you know we will partner with you to make sure that we can strengthen the campaign that you are doing.

And when we met with the Ministry of Health, we collectively decided on a testing day. That testing day as a media involved in the summit, we promoted that as our contribution to the testing day and it was an unprecedented turnout for the testing day. We had cameras there, people were quite comfortable and relaxed and this was a very effective way of demonstrating what we were talking about,

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that we as media in the Caribbean can lead the way in breaking down some of those barriers and using novel approaches to address some of the issues. So I would say that, in my view as a newcomer to the AIDS campaign among the experts, those are some real issues we have to deal with.

**JACOB GAYLE:** If I could just quickly add as well, just from the side of the epidemic, the HIV epidemic, I know we say we have sea, sun, sand and sex, but I think we have other issues that relate to the Caribbean and its unique nuances that are important to this epidemic, more than the other, those four S's. That is, we have a very highly mobile population in the Caribbean, people who are moving in as well as people who are moving out, constantly back and forth. We've got tourism being one of the major income generators in the region, as well as bringing in many, many people. Also just the Caribbean by [inaudible] across the world that is constantly coming back home and going back out. And so I think that the fact that we have such great mobility within the region as well as in and out having a consolidated partnership in media and in particular broadcast media helps to reach people literally wherever they are, across the boundaries that we see that really are just artificial boundaries in our case.

[Interposing]

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**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Tony, can you come to the mic first? Thank you.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Question on continuity and sustainability of the program. Dr. Gayle talked about further funding, but is it going to be the programming that is going to be based on some kind of commercial venture so that it can sustain itself over a period of time?

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** Certainly, that is the plan and part of the effectiveness of the partnership has already begun in having as a first step some repurposed material that is shared across the region to all of the broadcasters where we ourselves could not necessarily create the programming. I think the others tried through the partnership that is going to be critical that is build into the partnership is the training and the workshops for the persons who can then know all of the techniques in creating that material. There will be an exposure to the technical expertise that is required to using right language, how do you treat the subject, et cetera.

And I think that that for us in the region, it's going to be critical because you can't - we can have one set of programs in this first year of the committee and then revert and the intention is that there is a transfer of knowledge and skill that you have your [inaudible] and your programmers, your producers, your scriptwriters, your actors,

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everybody is going to benefit from this ongoing training and development in producing original programming. That's the key, original programming, in my view, that is customized for the Caribbean and taking into consideration all of the vagaries of each of our territories that is distinctly different.

**MATT JAMES:** If I could just add one thing, Allyson, at that. I know at least from the Kaiser Family Foundation, I think from our other partners we will watch this carefully and this is not something that we are just giving a little bit of funding to and a little bit of expertise and help and then stepping back. We intend to be there as long as there is progress that is being made in the Caribbean and I think there is going to be tremendous progress.

Also, what we have seen from working with media partners around the world is and this gets to what Allyson was talking about, a sort of transfer of skills. Media companies, once they get involved in this and media personnel when they get involved in these kinds of programs and learn about the issue of HIV/AIDS, I think then become committed themselves to carrying this work out. And they start to see by the way, that this doesn't have to be just preaching or public service announcements in the traditional way that when you tell the story about HIV/AIDS, there is humor, there is

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drama, there are all sorts of elements that lend themselves to what the media does best and the media tells stories.

And they find ways to communicate that to the public so we have found for instance in a lot of the domestic work that we've done in the United States, that the work that they have done on storylines they have done on HIV/AIDS, have turned out to be some of the most popular shows that they have produced and that is true whether it is a comedy or whether it is a drama. You'll have the same experience, I guarantee it, in the Caribbean because HIV encompasses so much of what the human story is all about and once writers and producers grapple with that and sort of get away from the stigma that is associated with HIV/AIDS. Believe me, it will start to become something that is compelling, they'll see those storylines and they'll see this—

**ALLYSON LEACOCK:** I think in closing, as we wrap up this afternoon, we also want to let you know that there are plans in place as we speak for each of us as broadcasters to record and measure the kind of programming that we do on an ongoing basis and there will be measurable outcomes to see the effectiveness over time of the programming that we have done.

Let me thank everyone at the head table, Scott Campbell from the Elton John AIDS Foundation and Dr. Jacob Gayle in particular, along with Kaiser for making this

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possible and for giving us the pleasure of making such a wonderful announcement as we move forward with our Caribbean broadcast media partnership and of course, Sir George Alleyne on behalf of the UN secretary general, whose idea it was to mobilize the media globally to fight HIV and AIDS. Let me thank all of you for coming this afternoon and asking us questions. We are available informally outside if you need any other questions.

[END RECORDING]