

## Annual General Meeting & Capacity Building Workshop

Over sixty CRN+ members from twenty-one Caribbean territories, including Guyana, journeyed to Georgetown last October for CRN+'s Annual General Meeting and 8th Capacity-building Workshop.

The AGM took place at Le Meridien Pegasus on October 6 and was followed by the Workshop on October 7 and 8. High on the agenda was the proposed new structure of the organization.

Other issues that came up for discussion were the Care and Treatment for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and the recently launched Anti Stigma and Discrimination campaign by CRN+ and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

***Stabilization + Internal Growth = Expansion*** was the theme for the 8th Capacity-building Workshop which was aimed at determining the concrete consequences of the implementation of CRN+'s amended Constitution, and initiating the action plan and implementation processes.

The action and implementation plans are in keeping with the four major recommendations of Human Resources Development Limited consulting intervention spearheaded by Mr. Stevenson Sarjeant.



(L-R) Dr Edwards, Ms Simon, Mr Browne, Ms Moses-Burton,  
Dr the Hon L Ramsammy, Dr Greene

The Capacity-building Workshop opened with a ceremony at which Dr the Honourable Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Health of Guyana, delivered the feature address. While cognizant of the tremendous progress made in the region with respect to HIV/AIDS, Dr Ramsammy underscored the necessity to confront the challenges that still face PLWHA.

He noted that the faces of PLWHA are most of the time invisible due to the high incidence of stigma and discrimination and renewed his commitment to supporting PLWHA in Guyana.

Also speaking at the ceremony were Dr Edward Greene, Assistant Secretary General of CARICOM, Dr Morris Edwards, Chair of CCNAPC, Mr Carl Browne of PIU/CARICOM, Ms Suzette Moses-Burton and Ms Yolanda Simon, of CRN+.

During the opening ceremony there was a moment of silence and the unveiling of a Memorial while a cultural group performed a dance tribute – all in honour of those who have passed away.

Participants were invited to spend a moment at the memorial to remember loved ones who were lost to HIV/AIDS.

Following the ceremony, the Workshop got underway with Mr Sarjeant reminding participants not to fall victim to their success.

In warning against complacency, he pointed out that though CRN+ had a history of success, it had struggled to achieve its position as the lead regional organization looking after the welfare of PLWHA. Mr Sarjeant also highlighted the need for “transformation from exclusion to inclusion” and the importance of moving from advocacy to action.

Over the next two days, Mr Sarjeant explored the concept of organizational change and the criteria for organizational health and the new constitution was reviewed with a view to clarifying any areas of misunderstanding or gaps.

Ms Maylene Leu-Bent of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Alliance introduced her organization to the delegates, highlighting the possibility of accessing financial and technical support and strengthening the current partnership between CRN+ and the Alliance.

The new Constitution of CRN+ and the Strategic Plan were reviewed and consensus was obtained from CRN+ members on the relevance of the priority areas of the Plan given the changes that the organization has undergone over the past year.

The meeting closed with a prayer and vote of thanks to all those who had contributed to its success. The Annual General Meeting and 8th Capacity-building Workshop was made possible through financial support from CARICOM, under the SIRHASC Project; CAREC (PAHO/WHO), UNAIDS and the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.

