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Dr Murilo Moreira, President CEN AIDS Brazil addresses the First regional Workshop of Business Coalitions from Latin America and the Caribbean Credit: UNAIDS

**São Paulo** - Business Coalitions on AIDS have emerged as an effective platform for the private sector response to the epidemic. AIDS has already claimed the lives of 25 million in the global workforce and remains a serious threat to business. Although some companies are already effectively addressing AIDS in the workplace, others simply do not know how or where to start mitigating risks. Business Coalitions have emerged to fill this gap and provide the private sector with the tools and processes it needs to effectively address AIDS in the workplace and in their surrounding communities.

### **Emergence of Business Coalitions on AIDS**

Business Coalitions also act as a voice for the private sector, often through representation on national AIDS committees and by interacting with other key stakeholders. Coalitions have formed partnerships with international donors, civil society groups, governments, other regional and national Business Coalitions. These relationships are critical in delivering a coordinated response to the epidemic.

UNAIDS has supported the development of a number of national business coalitions on HIV in regions heavily impacted by the epidemic. UNAIDS is currently working with over 30 national business coalitions, helping to support the private sector response to AIDS.

## First regional Workshop of Business Coalitions from Latin America and the Caribbean



Brazilian Business Council on HIV/AIDS Prevention (CEN)  
On October 6 and 7 2008, UNAIDS and the  
Brazilian Business Council on HIV/AIDS  
Prevention (CEN) convened a regional workshop  
of business coalitions and initiatives from Latin  
America and the Caribbean in Sao Paulo to

recognize the critical role that the private sector play in the response to HIV, exchange experiences and discuss challenges and opportunities.

The workshop was attended by coalitions from Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, and Suriname as well as the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas, the Barbados Workers Union, the Brazilian national AIDS Program, several companies members of the CEN, a state company from Paraguay, the national council of private companies from Panama and Venezuela, Futures Group, Impulso - a network of Mexican NGOs working on AIDS, the Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), and the ILO.

Participants discussed best practices, issues of funding, brainstormed on how to improve the coordination with labour unions and on how to optimize the integration of the private sector and workplace into national AIDS plans as well as the development of national HIV anti-discrimination workplace regulations.

“Too often we see companies developing lovely policies but falling down on the implementation side. You need to work on behaviour change education to leave something significant and sustainable behind,” noted Madhuri Supersad, HIV/AIDS technical adviser for ILO in the Caribbean region.

The workshop provided a forum for stakeholders working with business coalitions such as the ILO to reiterate the importance of the tripartite mechanism involving workers, employers and governments as well as to present the current process undertaken by the ILO leading towards a global standard on HIV/AIDS in the workplace in 2010.

Civil society was represented by a Mexican NGO and participants felt that much more needed to happen in many countries to build partnerships between the private sector and civil society to mutually benefit one another.



Participants at First regional Workshop of Business Coalitions from Latin America and the Caribbean Credit: UNAIDS

It was decided to revitalize some Latin American coalitions especially in the Mercosur region, or improve the visibility and impact of the existing ones - having in mind that there can not be a “one size fits all” approach in the region. These efforts could lead to the establishment of a Pan Latin America business coalition in the near future. The upcoming regional AIDS conference in Peru next April 2009 could be a great platform to launch such an initiative.

Participants committed to continue the dialogue started during this workshop by exchanging materials and activities and seeking advice from each other on specific topics.

The workshop was followed by the 10th anniversary celebrations of the CEN an anniversary which is a landmark for the private sector response not only in Brazil but for whole Latin America.

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