



For immediate release

## TLC and ECADE call for an end to inequality World AIDS Day 2021

**(Castries, December 1, 2021)** Inequality has always been integral to the spread of HIV and AIDS. On World AIDS Day December 1, 2021, ECADE joins with Tender Loving Care (TLC) in endorsing the 2021 theme “**End inequalities. End AIDS. End Pandemics**”.

Kenita Placide, Executive Director of ECADE says, “HIV continues to be unfairly associated with gay and bisexual men. HIV is no respecter of sexual orientation or gender identity. Anyone engaging in unsafe sexual practices is at risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmittable diseases. However messaging around HIV and AIDS continue to disadvantage communities that are already disproportionately negatively affected by bullying, stigma and discrimination. For marginalised and poor communities - including women and girls at risk and people living with addiction; ostracisation, financial insecurity, mental and emotional issues contribute to high rates of unsafe sexual practices.”

TLC, a support group for people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV), is a member of the [Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality \(ECADE\)](http://WWW.ECEQUALITY.ORG). ECADE serves advocacy organisations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender, queer people, PLHIV, women and girls at risk and other vulnerabilised communities.

Tamara Felicien, President of TLC notes, “The past year and a half has underscored the tightrope which PLHIV walk daily. Current treatments ensure ‘*Undetectable equals Untransmissible*’, however COVID-19 control measures has increased the many challenges to PLHIV adhering to their schedule of medication and with that, the risk of contracting HIV. The real issue here is clearly inequality.”

Placide adds, “We as a society must deal with the unequal treatment meted out to those we perceive as different; our elected representatives must ensure equal access to education, health, and financial opportunities for all as well as protections under the law.”

ECADE, which has 26 member organisations in 9 countries across the small island eastern Caribbean, supports work that includes comprehensive sex and sexuality education. The Alliance’s members also provide safer sex products, psycho-social support and empowerment for marginalised people and advocates for change at the policy level.

62 years after the earliest known case and 40 years after the first recorded cases of HIV-related illnesses and deaths in the western hemisphere, there has been great progress. HIV is no longer a death sentence as education and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) contribute to slowing the spread of HIV. Yet lack of information, awareness and continuing inequalities means HIV remains among us. The real health risks are exacerbated by stigma, discrimination and inequality, made worse by factors such as COVID-19.

Organisations like ECADE, TLC and the OECS Regional Coordinating Mechanism, continue to work locally, regionally and with international partners such as the Global Fund to ensure education, information, treatment and support. We continue to agitate for change and to hold government to account for the protection of all citizens.

- ENDS -

### **About ECADE**

The Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality Inc, is an independent umbrella of human rights organisations operating in the small islands in the eastern Caribbean. The Alliance's core membership represents the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. Associate membership comprises organisations working intersectionally. ECADE currently serves 26 member organisations in 9 countries.

Learn more at [info@eequality.org](mailto:info@eequality.org) or email [www.eequality.org](http://www.eequality.org)

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @EC\_equality

### **About TLC**

TLC or Tender Loving Care, is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing services for and supporting people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHIV) in Saint Lucia.

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