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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION SHOW BI-PARTISAN
LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT FOR REGIONAL HIV TESTING DAY 2009**

*HIV Testing at Scotiabank Branches Across the Region on June 26, 2009 – The Ministry of Health to
Oversee the Private, Voluntary Testing and Counselling;*

After Hours Testing at select locations/clubs on June 27, 2009

Barbados Prime Minister David Thompson and Opposition Leader Mia Mottley have united to show exemplary leadership and commitment in their response to HIV/AIDS through their support of Regional Testing Day 2009. On Friday, May 22, 2009 at a breakfast Media Launch at the Barbados Hilton, about 85 members of the media and Health community saw these two powerful figures set political differences aside and unite to mark their commitment to help stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region by supporting this initiative.

The Hon. David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados stated that “The proverbial silver bullet for HIV does not exist and our best hope to curtail this epidemic is through prevention. HIV testing is regarded as a fundamental strategy in HIV prevention.” Prime Minister Thompson went on to say that the Regional Testing Day initiative has the full support of the Barbados Government noting that he “commends the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS and the allied media houses that will make Regional Testing Day 2009 the success it must be.”

“I hope that past successes will be replicated, and similar achievements will be achieved in the other territories. I also urge fellow CARICOM leaders to embrace this initiative as we continue to courageously battle the HIV epidemic. Fellow Barbadians, and Caribbean citizens, go out and get tested!” urged Prime Minister Thompson.

Opposition Leader Mia Mottley said she was pleased to support this initiative and urged us to consider that: “The power of HIV/AIDS is greater than its ability to decimate populations and rob countries of their vital human resources. The real power lies in the fear it evokes in our heart and souls. Until we meet the HIV/AIDS challenge head on at that level, we will continue to witness uneven gains and reversals in hard won progress.” In support of Regional Testing Day, Ms. Mottley asserted that “HIV/AIDS does not diminish one’s value as a person. Neither does it limit the realization of the potential that each individual was born with, unless you let it. Voluntary testing empowers you to make those choices that will enable you to live the quality of life that you deserve. Voluntary testing sends a clear and strong message that I am in charge of my life. I

refuse to accept the role that may be assigned to me, but instead am a leader and fully responsible for my destiny.”

Led by Barbadian LIVE UP Hero Alison Hinds, both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition then stood together and demonstrated the new CBMP LIVE UP sign much to the delight of the audience.

Regional Testing Day was initiated by the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP) in 2008 with support from Scotiabank in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Pan Caribbean Partnership on HIV/AIDS (PANCAP). This year, Scotiabank will facilitate public counselling and testing at select branches across the region on Friday June 26. On Saturday June 27 in Barbados, a special outreach will be done to enable after-hours testing at select locations.

CBMP Executive Director and current Chairman of the World AIDS Campaign Dr. Allyson Leacock noted the importance of Barbados’ political leaders stepping forward to engage the public on the issues of voluntary testing and counselling and knowing one’s status.

“We are honoured that Barbados leads the way in the region and the world at this Media Launch of Regional Testing Day 2009,” Dr. Leacock indicated. “The coverage of this launch will be shared with my global media colleagues to show the commitment of Government and the Opposition, the Public and the Private Sector and NGOs to HIV/AIDS as a non-partisan issue that requires individual and collective action to help reduce stigma and discrimination.”

Senior Medical Officer in the Barbados Ministry of Health HIV Unit Dr. Anton Best said: “Testing is an effective form of prevention and through Regional Testing Day we aim to help reduce stigma and discrimination and uphold the rights of every human being to have universal access to prevention through testing, care and treatment.”

Managing Director of Scotiabank Caribbean East Mr. Kevin Teslyk stated that “Scotiabank readily partnered with the CBMP in this initiative given our long-term commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS with our Info’ Life outreach in schools and our Pledge Programme. We consider it vital not only to support efforts towards changing mindsets regarding HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination but also in the critical area of testing primarily to reduce infection rates.”

On Regional Testing Day, people will be provided the opportunity to visit select Scotiabank branches to participate in private, voluntary HIV counselling and testing conducted by trained and experienced personnel from the Ministry of Health. In order to build awareness about the testing day, the CBMP has designed and produced radio and television ads to be distributed to its now 85 top broadcast members from 25 countries throughout the region. These ads will reach tens of thousands of people in a coordinated media campaign effort.

At last year’s Regional Testing Day, more than 2000 people from six territories went to Scotiabank branches to be tested. This year, the number of participating territories has more than doubled

with 14 territories participating in Regional Testing Day 2009. These territories are Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Guyana, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, Haiti, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Jamaica and Grenada.

ABOUT SCOTIABANK

Scotiabank has been in the Caribbean and Central America since 1889, operating in 25 countries through nearly 370 branches and has a staff of about 10,160 people serving more than two million customers. Scotiabank is committed to supporting the well-being of communities in which it operates. Recognised as a leader internationally and among Canadian corporations for its charitable donations and philanthropic activities, in 2007 the Bank provided more than \$43 million in sponsorships and donations to a variety of projects and initiatives, primarily in the areas of healthcare, education, social services, the arts and culture. Please visit us at www.scotiabank.com.

ABOUT THE CBMP

The Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CBMP) unites 85 top broadcasters from 25 countries in the region's first coordinated media response to the pandemic. The Partnership creates a structured framework for sharing information and resources among broadcasters that significantly expands HIV/AIDS-related programming and public education activities across the Caribbean. Member broadcasters deliver HIV/AIDS information across a variety of platforms and formats, including targeted public service announcements (PSAs), entertainment programming, news and public affairs programming, and online resources.

The CBMP was launched in May 2006 at a regional summit of media executives on HIV/AIDS, organized by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The CBMP is overseen by a Board of Trustees chaired by Sir George Alleyne, UN Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean; a Steering Committee of broadcast executives chaired by Dr. David McBean of CVM Group, Jamaica and representing a diverse constituency of media houses from Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, and regional organizations Caribbean Media Corporation and Caribbean Broadcasting Union, with strategic and technical guidance and production support from Kaiser. The Ford Foundation and the Elton John AIDS Foundation are the other supporting partners.

In its three-year existence, The CBMP has received awards from the Global Business Coalition for its work as a model of business excellence in the field of HIV/AIDS; the Clinton Global Initiative, HBO and the NBA collaborated to provide CBMP with a PSA featuring Queen Latifah and Jamie Foxx for Caribbean Testing Campaign; and the most recent LIVE UP Heroes' Campaign (featuring Barbadians Alison Hinds and Corey Lane as well as former Ms. Universe of Trinidad and Tobago Wendy Fitzwilliam) was honoured at the 2009 Academy Awards After Party hosted by Sir Elton John. LIVE UP Hero from Jamaica Kerrel McKay attended on behalf of the CBMP.



From Left to Right: Managing Director of Scotiabank Caribbean East, Mr. Kevin Teslyk, CBMP LIVE UP Hero Corey Lane, Leader of the Opposition, The Hon. Mia Amor Mottely Q.C., M.P., The Prime Minister of Barbados, The Hon. David Thompson Q.C., M.P., Executive Director of the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS and Chairman of the World AIDS Campaign, Dr. Allyson Leacock, LIVE UP Hero Alison Hinds, Senior Medical Officer of Health HIV/AIDS Program in the Barbados Ministry of Health, Dr. Anton Best all showing the LIVE UP sign

Photo Courtesy of: Studio Studio/Carl Blenman