



The ICASO Plan on Human Rights, Social Equity and HIV/AIDS

ICASO

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF AIDS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	2
2.0 HUMAN RIGHTS AND HIV	3
3.0 FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES	7
3.1 Guiding Principles.....	7
3.2 Roles	7
3.3 Goals.....	8
3.4 Objectives.....	8
3.5 Activities.....	9
3.5.1 Networking.....	9
3.5.2 Communications	9
3.5.3 Partnerships	10
3.5.4 Development of Materials for Education and Advocacy	11
3.5.5 Working Within the International Human Rights System.....	11
3.5.6 Information Databases.....	12
3.6 Structures	13
4.0 WORKPLANS FOR SPECIFIC REGIONS	13
4.1 Asia/Pacific (APCASO).....	13
4.2 Africa (AfriCASO).....	14
4.3 Latin America and the Carribean (LACCASO).....	15

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) and its component networks and organizations have undertaken a process to determine how best to highlight human rights activities within the work it does on HIV/AIDS. This process included the ICASO Inter-Regional Consultation on Human Rights, Social Equity and HIV/AIDS, which was held in Toronto, Canada, in March 1998. This consultation constituted the first ever international meeting specifically focussing on HIV/AIDS and human rights, social equity and community networking issues.

The plan described in this document is an important milestone in this process. It is part of ICASO's ongoing efforts to provide a framework that will be useful in the work of community-based HIV/AIDS organizations.

The consultation also formally endorsed the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights issued by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights.

Participants to the Consultation believe that the Guidelines provide a platform for the development of activities and initiatives, including advocacy education. Community-based organizations (CBOs) would need to prioritize and select specific issues they feel are critical to their efforts in prevention of HIV/AIDS, and in the care and support of those living and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Section 2.0 of the document describes the links between human rights and HIV/AIDS.

Section 3.0 outlines a framework for the work ICASO will be doing over the next several years in the area of human rights, social equity and HIV/AIDS. The framework consists of guiding principles, role statements, goals, objectives, activities and structures. The framework has been prepared primarily from a global perspective.

Finally, Section 4.0 contains workplans from three of the five regions of ICASO (Asia/Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean) showing how human rights issues will be incorporated into their work.

The workplans contained in this document build on activities currently underway and on the discussions which have taken place over the last few years. ICASO invites other organizations working in HIV/AIDS to review these workplans and to decide whether some of its elements can be incorporated into their own plans. ICASO welcomes comments on this document and would like to be kept informed of the work other organizations are doing in the area of HIV/AIDS and human rights.

About ICASO

The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) unites groups throughout the world that have been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. ICASO believes that recognition of and respect for the human rights of all persons is central to an intelligent public health strategy to combat the epidemic. ICASO's mission is to support the work of community-based organizations (CBOs) around the world in the prevention of HIV transmission and in the care and treatment of people living with HIV, with particular emphasis on strengthening the response in communities with fewer resources.

The Central Secretariat of ICASO is located in Toronto, Canada. There are five autonomous regional councils, each with its own secretariat:

- African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfriCASO)
Regional Secretariat: Dakar, Senegal
- Asia/Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organizations (APCASO)
Regional Secretariat: Manila, Philippines
- European Council of AIDS Service Organizations (EuroCASO)
Regional Secretariat: Geneva, Switzerland
- Latin American and Caribbean Council of AIDS Service Organizations (LACCASO)
Regional Secretariat: Buenos Aires, Argentina
- North American Council of AIDS Service Organizations (NACASO)
Regional Secretariat: Washington, D.C., United States

2.0 HUMAN RIGHTS AND HIV

From the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there have been human rights dimensions to the work being done by CBOs in the areas of prevention, care, treatment and support. In the early days of the epidemic, the CBOs did not usually use the language of human rights to describe their work in this area. In fact, they tended to view human rights as foreign to their work and as embodied in the rhetoric of remote legal frameworks and documents. Despite this, from an early stage, the underlying principles of human rights have been evident in the community response to HIV/AIDS.

As the epidemic progressed, the intensity of the link between human rights and HIV/AIDS became more apparent, and the human rights dimensions of the work of CBOs better understood. CBOs began to move towards a vision and a practice of human rights where human rights was seen as integral to the community response to HIV/AIDS; as being driven by the experiences of people affected by HIV/AIDS; and as being available to everyone.

The following description of the relationship between human rights and HIV/AIDS is adapted from *The UNAIDS Guide to the United Nations Human Rights Machinery*.

Human Rights Relevant to HIV/AIDS

Which human rights are relevant to HIV/AIDS? Some of the most important rights are:

- non-discrimination and equality before the law
- life
- health
- liberty and security of the person
- freedom of expression
- freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- freedom of movement
- privacy
- to marry and found a family
- education
- work
- an adequate standard of living
- social security, assistance and welfare
- to seek and enjoy asylum
- to share in scientific advancements and its benefits
- to participate in public and cultural life

In addition, the rights of the child and the rights of women are expressed in human rights conventions that explicitly address the rights of these groups.

Application of Relevant Human Rights

In all situations, the protection of human rights is essential to safeguard human dignity and to ensure a humane existence for individuals and societies. In the case of HIV/AIDS, the protection of human rights accomplishes these overall goals. It also specifically reduces vulnerability to infection by HIV – i.e., it prevents transmission and reduces the impact of HIV/AIDS on those already infected or otherwise affected – i.e., it protects the dignity of people affected by HIV/AIDS and enables them to cope with the disease.

Reducing Vulnerability to Infection by HIV

Prevention of transmission depends on people being provided with information and support for practising safer sex and other safe behaviour, and acting responsibly. The protection of human rights helps to create the supportive atmosphere necessary to encourage people to come forward, to benefit from HIV education and services, and to enable them to change their behaviour. Coercive measures not only violate human rights but also subvert this process.

To protect the dignity of those in need of HIV-related information and to prevent the spread of infection, the following rights are relevant:

- **the right to non-discrimination** – so that people are protected against mistreatment if they are HIV positive, are suspected of being HIV positive, or belong to a marginalized group
- **the right to privacy** – so that people are protected against mandatory testing, and so that their HIV status is kept confidential
- **the right to education and information** – so that people can access education and information on HIV prevention
- **the right to health** – so that people can access services for health care and prevention, including services for sexually transmitted diseases, condoms, lubricants, clean injection equipment and methods of cleaning injection equipment

Many groups in society already suffer discrimination or disadvantage because of their social, ethnic, racial or legal status. This often means they have less access to education, information and health care. It also means they are more vulnerable to infection with HIV. Depending on the situation in particular countries and the status of particular groups, the disadvantaged may include women, children, minorities, indigenous people, poor people, migrant workers, refugees, sex workers, drug users, men who have sex with men, and prisoners.

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Human rights protection should be ensured for such groups so that they have equal access to: information and education on HIV prevention; health care; means of prevention such as condoms and clean injection equipment; economic opportunities; and social support. They should also have equality in social, political and sexual relationships. This would help to enable them to avoid infection. Human rights protection should also enable, women, children, sex workers and prisoners to avoid coerced sex, including unsafe sex. Finally, such groups should be able to participate equally and meaningfully in public life, including the formulation and implementation of HIV/AIDS policies that affect them.

Reducing the Impact of HIV/AIDS

A number of rights protect the dignity of people living with HIV and those otherwise affected. These rights empower people living with HIV and their families to cope with HIV/AIDS by maintaining their health, employment, standard of living, and quality of life. These rights are:

- **the right to non-discrimination and equality before the law** – so as not to be mistreated on the basis of HIV status
- **the right to liberty** – so as to be protected against imprisonment, segregation or isolation imposed solely because of HIV status, and to be protected against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment imposed because of one's HIV status
- **the right to health** – so as not to be denied health care and treatment because of HIV status
- **the right to education** – so as not to be dismissed from school on the basis of HIV status
- **the right to work** – so as not to be fired or not recruited because of HIV status
- **the right to marry and found a family** – so as not to be denied marriage, and so as not to be required to undergo abortion or sterilization, if pregnant and HIV positive
- **the right to social security, assistance and welfare** – so as not to be denied these benefits on the basis of HIV status
- **the right to freedom of movement** – so as not be subject to travel restrictions on the basis of HIV status
- **the right to seek and enjoy asylum, if HIV positive.**

These rights apply not only to mistreatment based on HIV status, but also to discrimination against people living with HIV based on other factors, such as sex, sexual orientation, race and occupation.

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3.0 FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

ICASO has established a framework to guide the work it will be doing over the next several years in the area of human rights, social equity and HIV/AIDS. The framework consists of guiding principles, role statements, goals, objectives, activities and structures. Most of the content of this section has been prepared from a global perspective and will be fine-tuned to take into account specific regional and country contexts.

3.1 Guiding Principles

- There are human rights dimensions to all of the HIV/AIDS work being done by community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PWA) groups.
- There are HIV/AIDS dimensions to the work being done by human rights NGOs.
- Networking is a critical component of the strategies ICASO uses to address human rights issues and other HIV/AIDS issues.
- Effective communications is essential to effective networking.
- The response of HIV/AIDS organizations to human rights issues can be strengthened through:
 - the systematic collection, dissemination and utilization of relevant information about HIV/AIDS and human rights;
 - integrating human rights activities into all HIV/AIDS work;
 - partnerships with organizations working to promote and protect human rights;
 - integrating HIV/AIDS work into the activities of organizations working to promote and protect human rights; and
 - building a stronger civil society.

3.2 Roles

National Focal Points

- To establish an appropriate structure (network, coalition, etc.) to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues at the country level.*
- To develop and implement a workplan to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues at the country level. The workplan should include external actions (education, advocacy, etc.) and internal actions (education, training, community development, etc.).*
- To lend support to other national focal points in the region (where possible and appropriate).
- To represent a nationally recognized reference point on human rights and HIV/AIDS.
- To participate in regional and global HIV/AIDS and human rights activities.

**NOTE: In some countries, national focal points act primarily as facilitators. In these cases, their role would be to facilitate or lobby for an appropriate structure to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues; and to facilitate or advocate for the development and implementation of a workplan to address these issues.*

Most of the work required to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues should happen at the national level because this is where most laws and policy decisions affecting human rights are made, and because the issues will vary somewhat from country to country.

Regional secretariats

- To strengthen the work being done at the national level to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues. (This should be the primary thrust of human rights activities undertaken by the regional secretariats.)
- To develop and implement a workplan to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues at the regional and sub-regional levels.
- To participate in global and regional HIV/AIDS and human rights activities.

Central Secretariat

- To strengthen the work being done at the national level to address HIV/AIDS and human rights issues. (This should be the primary thrust of human rights activities undertaken by the Central Secretariat.)
- To develop and implement a workplan to address human rights issues at the global level.
- To support the development and implementation of workplans that have been developed at the national and regional levels.
- To facilitate and promote inter-regional initiatives and collaborations.

3.3 Goals

- To strengthen the ability of CBOs, NGOs and PWA groups working in HIV/AIDS to advocate for responses to the epidemic which more effectively protect and promote human rights.
- To advocate directly at the national, regional and global levels for responses to the epidemic which more effectively protect and promote human rights.
- To empower people living with HIV and communities vulnerable to HIV infection to understand, to advocate for and to realize their human rights.

3.4 Objectives

- To promote and strengthen national, regional, inter-regional and global networking around the human rights dimensions of HIV/AIDS issues.
- To improve communications on HIV/AIDS and human rights issues.
- To develop partnerships with organizations working to promote and protect human rights.
- To strengthen the capacity of CBOs, NGOs and PWA groups to identify and understand the human rights dimensions of their HIV work, and to address human rights issues.
- To develop culturally appropriate materials that will assist CBOs, NGOs and PWA groups with the work they are doing on HIV/AIDS and human rights issues.
- To facilitate data gathering and information sharing on human rights issues among CBOs, NGOs and PWA groups working in HIV/AIDS.
- To raise the profile of HIV/AIDS and human rights issues at international, regional and national conferences and among international organizations working in the fields of human rights, health and development.
- To promote, advocate for, and monitor the implementation of resolutions, declarations, guidelines and other international instruments that impact on HIV/AIDS and human rights; and, if necessary, to help bring about new resolutions, declarations, guidelines and other international instruments.

3.5 Activities

The following is a list of activities which ICASO will attempt to undertake in the next few years.

Please note that it may not be possible for ICASO to accomplish everything in the list of activities. It may be appropriate for other organizations to take on portions of this work.

3.5.1 Networking

- Disseminate information about lessons learned, best practices, and successes and failures.
- Facilitate exchanges (e.g., visits by successful networks and groups).
- Lobby for resources for people to meet and to define specific issues at the country level.
- Prepare workshop guidelines on the link between human rights and HIV/AIDS.
- Prepare a resource list of people at the regional level who can assist in the networking process.
- Increase the profile and presence of ICASO at the country level.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following are some general guidelines for ICASO's activities in the area of networking:

- Networks cannot be established from outside or from the top down.
- PWAs and CBOs need to work together.
- Clear roles need to be established (this should happen at the national level).
- Resources are required at the national level to facilitate face-to-face meetings.
- It will be necessary to deal with people's expectations of national networks as a source of funding.
- It is important to evaluate the network's activities.

3.5.2 Communications

- Develop a document on communications policies and guidelines. The document should include:
 - information on the different types of communications (organizational vs. thematic/substantive);
 - guidelines on good communications practices; and
 - recommended formats for specific types of communications (such as reporting human rights violations).
- Improve access to electronic mail.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When planning communications strategies, it is important to ensure that hard copies of documents remain an integral component of such strategies. Not everyone has easy access to the new e-mail and Internet technologies.

3.5.3 Partnerships

Global and Regional Levels

- Document and disseminate examples of successful collaborations.
- Develop communications strategies and ways to work with the media.
- Develop joint projects with potential partners.
- Target one or two key partners initially.
 - send a report of the March 1998 Human Rights Consultation in Toronto, Canada, along with a request for collaboration, to one or two human rights NGOs.
 - once ICASO has worked with these partners to map out the terrain, it can expand from there.
- Use the meeting on human rights planned for Geneva just prior to the 12th World AIDS Conference to explore and develop partnership opportunities.
- Ensure that the newsletters of the Central Secretariat and the regional secretariats are distributed to more human rights NGOs.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following are some general guidelines for ICASO's activities in the area of global and regional networking:

- Objectives will need to be established for each proposed partnership.
- Development NGOs should be targeted as well as human rights NGOs.
- Forming partnerships with global organizations does not always mean that partnerships at the national level automatically ensue.

National Level

- Develop educational materials (e.g., fact sheets) that present the link between HIV/AIDS and human rights.
- Develop training workshops (2-way training).
- Prepare briefing sessions for use prior to the training workshops.
- Invite human rights NGOs to participate in the activities of AIDS service organizations.
- Encourage exchanges and/or cross-membership.
- Develop joint projects e.g., human rights campaigns and lobby efforts. (Links should be established with different organizations, depending on the topic.)
- Encourage co-sponsorship of activities.
- Encourage human rights and other NGOs to include HIV/AIDS in their legal assistance projects.
- Use existing newsletters and other tools available through human rights and other NGOs to conduct education on HIV/AIDS issues.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following is a list of objectives established for ICASO's activities in national partnerships:

- To ensure that HIV/AIDS is included in the national human rights agenda.
- To ensure that human rights issues are included in the national AIDS strategy.
- To promote cross-fertilization of skills and knowledge.
- To share resources.

The following is a list of the types of partners that national focal points could seek out:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| • Patient organizations (e.g., PWA groups) | • Human rights NGOs | • Consumer rights organizations |
| • CBOs, including but not limited to: | • Religious organizations | • Development NGOs |
| • gay | • Government human rights agencies | • Democracy NGOs |
| • women | • Professional organizations (e.g., lawyers) | • UN organizations |
| • migrants | • Parliamentary committees | • AIDS service organizations |
| • sex workers | • Academia | |
| • indigenous | • Media | |

3.5.4 Development of Materials for Education and Advocacy

Global Level

All of the activities at the global level concern the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, released by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- Develop train-the-trainer workshops. The workshops should include:
 - a step-by-step guide on how to use the guidelines;
 - generic workshop guidelines;
 - explanation of the link between HIV/AIDS and HIV; and
 - information on the role of ICASO.
- Evaluate and monitor the implementation of the International Guidelines.
 - the monitoring and evaluation should capture different kinds of experiences from the local to the national to the global (i.e., not just major changes at the higher levels).
- Prepare an updated version of the *Advocate's Guide**.
- Make the *Advocate's Guide** and the *NGO Summary** available in more languages.
 - the translation process may be a way of starting a dialogue within a country.
- Prepare an annual report on developments with respect to the implementation of the International Guidelines and on HIV/AIDS and to human rights in general.

* These are two documents produced by ICASO. Their full titles are:
An Advocate's Guide to the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights;
and *NGO Summary of the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*.

Regional Level

- Help develop the materials for the proposed train-the-trainer workshops to be developed at the global level (for the International Guidelines).
- Promote regional compacts (e.g., APCASO).
- Develop a model format for information collection.
- Share tools between regions (e.g., LACCASO and APCASO).

3.5.5 Working within the International Human Rights System

National Level

- Work with the UN treaty-based bodies to raise human rights and HIV/AIDS issues. (It will be up to each national focal point to decide whether to get involved.)

Regional Level

- Work with the regional human rights bodies (if the region decides it is an appropriate use of resources).

Global Level

- Work with the United Nations Charter-based bodies providing objectives are clearly defined at the outset.
- For the first few years, at least, ICASO will work with one body, the Commission on Human Rights. It will not target a new body each year.
- ICASO will need dedicated staff and will need to be prepared to make a year-round effort.
- Support the work of national focal points by:
 - disseminating the schedule of appearances of states before the United Nations treaty-based bodies; and
 - assisting with skills training, development of submissions, etc.

- Explore ways of working with UNAIDS to further ICASO's activities in this area.

3.5.6 Information Databases

- Develop an information database strategy which includes guidelines for regional secretariats and national focal points. The strategy should cover:
 - what information is already available;
 - what additional information should be collected;
 - why that information should be collected;
 - how it will be used;
 - who the client is;
 - who collects the information, how it is collected, and how regularly it is collected;
 - what formats will be used;
 - what additional research is required; and
 - recommendations for how the information can feed into advocacy, education, etc.
- Develop a system to gather, collect and store information at the local level. The system should include simple data gathering tools.
- Create a database on human rights violations. (More discussion is required to define "violations". It should include more than narrowly-defined individual cases of discrimination.)
- Create a database on success stories – i.e., positive developments.
- Provide training on how to use databases.
- Identify and train human rights brokers (people at the country level with expertise in human rights issues).
- Locate, consolidate and distribute a dictionary or lexicon on human rights and legal terminology.
- Report and record examples of best legislation.
- Document international processes relevant to national lobbying (i.e., processes that have been developed and used regionally to lobby for the promotion and protection of human rights that can be adapted nationally.)
- Identify organizations that can take on and maintain the databases.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following guiding principles were established for ICASO's work in the area of information databases:

- There is a need to avoid duplication between projects.
- There is a need to identify what information is being collected and where the gaps are.
- There is a need to establish how the information will be used and who will use it.
- It is better not to be too ambitious (perhaps start with a pilot).
- We should build on what is already out there (and consolidate, popularize and support existing efforts).
- The information has to cover all regions.
- Each database needs a mission statement.
- The databases need to be user friendly (i.e., employ an accessible format that recognizes uses for the information).
- Summaries should be translated whenever entire documents cannot be translated.
- Information must flow both ways: up and down.
- Where possible, standardized systems for collection and storage should be developed.

3.6 Structures

Global Level

At the global level, to fully integrate human rights activities into its work, ICASO will seek sufficient funding to create one or two ongoing staff positions. The staff persons will be supported by a working group made up of volunteers from each of the five regions.

Regional Level

Structures to address human rights issues at the regional level are currently evolving. Some of the regional secretariats are including activities in their workplans that are related to human rights; they will be seeking funding for one or two staff positions to carry out these activities.

4.0 WORKPLANS FOR SPECIFIC REGIONS

Three of the five regions of ICASO – Asia/Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean – have developed workplans detailing how they will highlight human rights activities within the work they will be doing in the future. This section presents a summary of these workplans. Please note that these workplans were current at the time this document was prepared (June 1998) and that they will likely be modified over time.

4.1 Asia/Pacific (APCASO)

The following is the APCASO workplan for the period 1998-2001.

Objectives

1. Strengthen the capacity of APCASO to generate and promote an awareness of the central role of human rights in a multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS at the regional, sub-regional and national levels.
2. Continue to strengthen the meaningful involvement of persons living with HIV in decision making, planning and project implementation at government, non-government and community levels.
3. Increase the participation of affected communities in the national and regional response to HIV/AIDS in the Asia Pacific region.
4. Enhance the skills of CBOs and NGOs through a series of train-the-trainers workshops in the following areas: (a) networking and advocacy, and (b) project planning.
5. Develop coordinated action between and among CBOs and NGOs through the APCASO secretariat, national focal points, and members of the Council of Representatives.
6. Strengthen linkages between APCASO and other key players in the Asia/Pacific region (e.g., other regional networks, international bodies) through information exchange and collaborative activities.

Activities

Human Rights

1. Establish a Human Rights Program Committee.
2. Conduct orientation and training sessions for national focal points on human rights and HIV/AIDS.
3. Conduct five sub-regional workshops on human rights and HIV/AIDS.
4. Conduct 20 in-country workshops (to be organized by the national focal points).
5. Translate the manual prepared for the training sessions into five languages other than English.

6. Popularize, reproduce and disseminate the *APCASO Compact on Human Rights*, and ICASO's *Advocate's Guide and NGO Summary*.
7. Network with other human rights NGOs.

Participation and involvement of Persons living with HIV and affected communities

1. Provide technical support to the Asia/Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+) initiatives on human rights, access to treatment, information exchange and skills building for persons living with HIV.
2. Encourage NGOs and CBOs in the region to actively participate in national, regional and global networking.
3. Encourage non-HIV/AIDS agencies (such as women's groups and human rights groups) to become involved in HIV work.
4. Assist in the development and planning of regional conferences, with an emphasis on ensuring adequate and appropriate community input.
5. Conduct six train-the-trainer workshops on project planning.

Coordinated Action

1. Identify national focal points in all countries in the region, to help facilitate networking and in-country communications.
2. Provide e-mail services (computer and/or modem) to all national focal points.
3. Ensure regular communications, through e-mail and fax, to all national focal points, the regional secretariat, and members of the Council of Representatives.
4. Develop communications links with other regional networks, international agencies and donors.
5. Conduct seven train-the-trainer workshops in networking and advocacy techniques for national focal points and other NGOs.
6. Arrange for key resource people to provide technical support to new or expanded CBO initiatives.
7. Support the lobbying and advocacy activities of community-based groups and other regional networks.
8. Prepare position papers on priority issues.
9. Produce and distribute an APCASO newsletter (twice a year) and other relevant documents (in English, Chinese, Indonesian, Hindi, Khmer, Vietnamese, Urdu, Bengali, Thai, Nepalese, French and/or Pidgin).
10. Develop an APCASO web site.
11. Organize two meetings a year of the Council of Representatives.
12. Organize an annual meeting of national focal points, in conjunction with one of the meetings of the Council of Representatives.

4.2 Africa (AfriCASO)

The following is the AfriCASO workplan for the period 1998-2001.

Objective 1

To strengthen networking and build networks among organizations and groups working on HIV/AIDS at country, subregional and continental levels.

Activities

1. Disseminate and promote the ICASO HIV/AIDS Networking Guide.
2. Provide technical support to countries with no networks or under-developed networks.

3. Promote the development of "twinning" – i.e., collaborative links between networks.
4. Develop strategic partnerships with organizations working on HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Objective 2

To advocate for the interests of AIDS services organizations and to promote the development of the capacity of the AIDS service organizations to lobby for their own interest.

Activities

1. Establish a Human Rights Advisory Committee.
2. Produce periodic position papers and discussion documents.
3. Promote the development of an advocacy capacity within AfriCASO (e.g., skills building workshops).
4. Conduct ongoing advocacy with partner organizations involved in day-to-day lobbying on HIV/AIDS and human rights.

Objective 3

To exchange and facilitate the sharing of appropriate, practical and timely information on HIV/AIDS among AIDS service organizations in Africa.

Activities

1. Ensure timely communications by disseminating an AfriCASO Newsletter (twice a year); by disseminating regular information updates (at least six times a year) on activities within AfriCASO organizations; by disseminating periodic information brochures on AfriCASO's programs and activities; and by maintaining a home page on the ICASO web site.
2. Provide technical support to selected national focal points to enhance their communications capabilities.
3. Maintain regular contact with the ICASO Central Secretariat and other regional HIV/AIDS networks.
4. Actively participate in regional AIDS conferences.
5. Develop a database of national focal points and key resource people.

4.3 Latin America and the Caribbean (LACCASO)

The following is the LACCASO workplan for the period 1997-2000.

Objectives 1

Strengthen the institutional capacity of national focal points, the regional secretariat and members of the LACCASO thematic working groups.

Activities

1. Establish an electronic e-mail network connecting national focal points and the regional secretariat, and facilitate its implementation (through training and funding for basic equipment).
2. Possibly hold at least one annual meeting of the regional management committee.
3. Possibly hold meetings of the national focal points once every two years.
4. Update the inventory of NGO human and technical resources in the region.
5. Have LACCASO participate as co-sponsor of regional conferences.
6. Improve the networking capacities of the LACCASO national focal point organizations.
7. Undertake exploratory visits to Latin America and the Caribbean NGOs in countries not involved with LACCASO in order to reach new national focal points.

Objective 2

Improve the ability of NGOs to take action and to respond effectively, particularly in the areas of prevention of HIV, advocacy (including promotion, defence and management) and negotiations with government representatives.

Activities

1. Organize exchanges of training on prevention activities among national focal points.
2. Organize exchanges of advocacy activities and experiences on negotiations with government representatives.
3. Organize a strategic planning meetings between the LACCASO regional management committee and HORIZONTEC (the national government network in Latin America) to develop areas of potential collaboration.
4. Update the Latin American and the Caribbean HIV/AIDS NGO mailings and materials.

Objective 3

Develop strategies and collaborative links with regional human rights, development and other NGOs networks and initiatives.

Activities

1. Carry out six case studies on human rights in Ecuador, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Republica Dominicana and Venezuela. (These case studies will be done with the cooperation of UNAIDS; each country will focus on different problems.)
2. Strengthen the national response in the area of advocacy on human rights issues through the training of national focal points and NGOs at national level.