



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**



Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

IN REPLY REFER TO: AD/FCH/AI/63/2

11 March 2005

Dr. Richard Stern  
Director  
Asociación Agua Buena Pro-Defensa  
de los Derechos Humanos  
Apartado 366-2200  
Coronado, Costa Rica

Dear Dr. Stern:

Ref: PAHO's Work with Civil Society and People Living with HIV/AIDS

As part of its commitment to the "3 by 5" Initiative in the Americas, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) wishes to emphasize that it is by a combined effort of technical support agencies, National AIDS programs, development partners and people who are affected by the epidemic that we will have the most impact in moving towards the goal of universal access to antiretrovirals in Latin America and the Caribbean.

HIV/AIDS is closely related to a variety of social factors such as gender inequality, discrimination, poverty, exclusion of minorities, and culture. As such, AIDS is a health and development issue in which close partnerships with affected populations are needed, in order to address the key social and economic factors that negatively affect the epidemic.

As part of a renewed effort to partner with people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) groups, focused on treatment access as well as prevention, PAHO will promote among its staff an increased awareness of the importance of engaging all actors involved, including civil society, in the decisions that affect them. PAHO staff will be encouraged to reach out to form ties with all organizations throughout the Region and to establish fruitful working relationships. The Organization will also seek constructive and meaningful feedback from them regarding its technical cooperation in HIV/AIDS in the Americas.

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In support of accelerated access to treatment that is framed in a human rights approach, PAHO will work towards facilitating communication between all key actors and stakeholders and in leveraging support to organizations to ensure that they become active and empowered partners in the regional and national dialogue, including dialogue with PAHO itself.

It is only by working together that we will achieve the development of more effective and humane AIDS prevention and care programs and a successful end to an epidemic that has so much threatened the social and economic fabric of our societies.

Sincerely yours,



Mirta Róses Periaño  
Director