

# THE TORONTO CHARTER

## Indigenous Peoples' Action Plan on HIV/AIDS 2006

### PREAMBLE

The Toronto Charter is a call to action directed at people who influence and make decisions about the provision of HIV/AIDS services for Indigenous Peoples around the world.

The Toronto Charter was developed and formulated by Indigenous Peoples throughout the world.

The Toronto Charter is intended to support agencies working in HIV/AIDS to develop programmes that will make a real difference to Indigenous Peoples and the communities from which they come.

### KEY PRINCIPLES

Acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples have shared experiences relating to the AIDS epidemic and its impacts on our communities.

**Affirm** that the AIDS epidemic continues to have a devastating effect on our communities.

**Acknowledge** that Indigenous Peoples have inherent rights which guarantee them good health and well-being.

**Acknowledge** that the changing patterns of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are placing Indigenous Peoples at increased risk of HIV infection.

**Recognise** that Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine their own health priorities.

**Reaffirm** that Indigenous Peoples have the right to control all aspects of their lives, including their health.

### HIV/AIDS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Three decades into the HIV/AIDS epidemic Indigenous Peoples are adversely affected by this epidemic.

The epidemic is having a profound effect on families and communities from which we come.

In some countries, Indigenous Peoples have disproportionately higher rates of HIV infection than non-Indigenous people.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on Indigenous Peoples is compounded by a range of socio-cultural factors that place Indigenous Peoples at increased risk of HIV/AIDS.

It is essential that HIV/AIDS data on Indigenous Peoples be collected, analysed and reported in a manner that is respectful of the needs of Indigenous Peoples as identified by Indigenous Peoples themselves.

### RIGHT TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Indigenous Peoples have a holistic view of health which includes physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions all of which need to be considered and emphasized as a basis for defining approaches to Indigenous Peoples' health.

Indigenous Peoples have the right to a state of health that is at least equal to that of other people.

Governments are responsible for ensuring equitable access to health services and equitable health outcomes for all citizens. Governments must be committed to consulting with Indigenous Peoples in order to ensure that health programmes meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples.

Health and social programmes for Indigenous Peoples must provide culturally appropriate service delivery. Programmes need to incorporate and integrate traditional healers and systems where appropriate.

Indigenous Peoples must be able to have access to their own languages in the provision of health and social services.

Health and social programmes must disseminate and communicate information about the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS that is relative to the reality in which Indigenous Peoples live.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure the central participation of Indigenous Peoples in all programmes related to the prevention of HIV and programmes for the care and support of Indigenous Peoples living with HIV/AIDS.

Provide adequate resources to Indigenous Peoples to design, develop and implement HIV/AIDS programmes.

Increase current resources so that Indigenous communities can respond in a timely and effective way to the demands placed on communities by the AIDS epidemic.

Ensure the process of participation of Indigenous Peoples in United Nations forums is strengthened so their views are fairly represented.

Incorporate this Charter in its entirety in all policy pertaining to Indigenous Peoples and HIV/AIDS.

Monitor and take action against any States whose persistent policies and activities fail to acknowledge and support the integration of this Charter into State policies relating to HIV/AIDS.

*The Toronto Charter is an initiative of the Planning Committee of the International Indigenous Peoples' Satellite at the 16th International AIDS Conference, 2006 and has been endorsed by Indigenous Peoples around the world.*

