



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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**APPLICATION BY THE AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORA GLOBAL
NETWORK ON HIV AND AIDS (ABDGN) FOR REPRESENTATION
BY AN OBSERVER**

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1. In a letter dated 5 January 2012, a copy of which is appended as Annex I, the Co-Chairs of the African and Black Diaspora Global Network on HIV and AIDS (ABDGN) made a formal application for their Organization to be accorded observer status at meetings of the IOM Council. The Director General's reply thereto, dated 11 June 2012, is appended as Annex II. An appropriate item will be included on the provisional agenda of the 101st Session of the Council.
2. This matter falls under rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure for the Council which provides that the Council may admit, upon their application, international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, concerned with migration, refugees or human resources as observers at its meetings.
3. An appropriate draft resolution will be submitted to the Council when this matter comes up for decision.

Annex I

**LETTER DATED 5 JANUARY 2012 FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE
AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORA GLOBAL NETWORK ON HIV AND
AIDS (ABDGN) TO THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

Sir,

On behalf of the entire Governing Council of the African and Black Diaspora Global Network on HIV and AIDS (ABDGN) we are pleased to submit this letter of request for observer status to the IOM Council. We see great synergy between the work of the ABDGN and the goals of IOM, and believe a more formal partnership to facilitate ongoing dialogue, feedback, and consultations with our networks of African/Black migrant and mobile populations across the Diaspora is essential.

ABDGN is a ‘network of networks’ that emerged from activities organized for the African and Black Diaspora stream at the 16th International AIDS Conference (IAC) held in Toronto, Canada in August 2006. The first of its kind at the IAC, the Diaspora stream presented an extraordinary opportunity to highlight the HIV/AIDS pandemics amongst African and Black populations living in the western world, inclusive of migrant/immigrant/refugee populations, and the impacts on individuals and communities to mount effective responses. ACCHO and the Black AIDS Institute (BAI) with infrastructure support from Women’s Health in Women’s Hands Community Health Centre (WHIWH), mobilized and obtained support from the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and the Toronto Local Host Secretariat for AIDS 2006.

ACCHO then recruited an international advisory committee with organizations from Canada, the United States and Europe to facilitate the implementation of the stream for the conference. Through participant discussions and feedback, and the successful partnerships and collaborations that emerged, the committee decided to move forward in establishing a global network entitled “African and Black Diaspora Global Network on HIV and AIDS”. *Our mission* is to strengthen the response to HIV/AIDS epidemics and associated stigma/discrimination amongst African/Black/Caribbean Diaspora (ABCD) populations using a rights-based approach. Our focus on migration, immigration, refugees, health, HIV, and human rights, advocacy and policy change make us a unique and emerging influential voice representing ABCD populations worldwide.

The Governing Council of ABDGN is comprised of the following organizations: Women’s Health in Women’s Hands Community Health Centre (WHIWH)-Canada; African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO)-Canada; Interagency Coalition on HIV and Development (ICAD)-Canada; African Services Committee (ASC)-United States; Black AIDS Institute (BAI)-United States; Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC)-Jamaica; African Health Policy Network (AHPN)-United Kingdom; AIDES-France; European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG); and the Australian Federation of

AIDS Organizations (AFAO)-Australia. As a result of the international representation on the governing council, the scope of ABDGN's work is global and informed by networks at the local, national and regional level. Each of the Governing Council member organizations have well established and recognized research, policy, programming and advocacy expertise within national, regional, and global contexts, for a diverse range of populations living with and at risk of HIV/AIDS. ABDGN has also established working relationships with governments and other decision makers at country specific and international levels including institutions such as the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), International Affairs Directorate, Health Canada (H.C), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNAIDS.

WHIWH has been the legal trustee of ABDGN since its inception in 2006, and remains an important partner to help facilitate the operation of the network. WHIWH is a community based organization that provides primary healthcare services for immigrant and refugee women from the African, Caribbean, Latin American and South Asian communities living in Toronto and surrounding areas. The centre works from an inclusive feminist, pro-choice, anti-racist, anti-oppression, and multilingual participatory framework in providing healthcare services and addressing the issues of access to healthcare for mandated priority populations encompassing all the determinants of health of importance to immigrant and refugee women. WHIWH provides care to more than 350 women living with HIV in Toronto, majority of who are from the HIV-endemic countries of Africa and the Caribbean. This is the largest cohort of women living with HIV in Canada within a community based setting. The centre has developed a unique HIV service delivery model that links HIV treatment, support, treatment and care as a continuum and directly links practice to policy and research.

WHIWH and ABDGN have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the sponsorship/trustee relationship and have successfully applied for funds from various sources including Health Canada, UNAIDS, and the Ford Foundation. The MOU also includes provisions for ABDGN to utilize the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consultative status of WHIWH to inform and influence key member states and diverse UN-related global health stakeholders, government representatives, and civil society partners with on the ground, regionally contextualized action plans and recommendations. WHIWH has held this status since 2001.

IOM works in partnership with the international community to uphold the dignity and well-being of migrants, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage economic and social development, and to support the growing operational needs of migration management. ABDGN shares these overarching goals in the context of African and Black migrant populations, and are increasingly working in solidarity with broader populations as we see the commonalities of disparity experienced by migrants of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. When reviewing the 12 points in the IOM Strategic Focus, we see further similarities in the approach and priorities between IOM and ABDGN, and the mutually beneficial relationship that could be strengthened through the observer status and ongoing collaboration initiatives between IOM and ABDGN.

ABDGN has been working in various capacities with IOM since 2009 when representatives from the network were invited to participate at the UNAIDS Programme

Coordinating Board meeting on migration entitled “People on the Move” and had the opportunity to introduce IOM to the objectives and goals of ABDGN. In September 2010, Rhon Reynolds, co-chair of ABDGN coordinated a series of meetings regarding migration, human rights and HIV of which IOM was a participant. More recently, in March 2011, ABDGN initiated ongoing discussions with IOM about ABDGN’s proposed statement on migrant and mobile populations for inclusion in the UNGASS 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, which was successfully adopted into the final declaration in June 2011. ABDGN was also invited to attend the IOM informal debate on migration and development held at the United Nations in May 2011. ABDGN was also invited to sit on a panel presentation organized by IOM for the UNGASS High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS on HIV and migration. ABDGN has been involved in ongoing discussions to explore partnership opportunities with IOM linked to activities planned for AIDS 2012 in Washington DC, which include a potential collaboration with IOM, ECDC, Health Canada, CDC and the Public Health Agency of Canada. Linked to AIDS 2012, ABDGN has been selected to chair the Black Diaspora Regional Working Group, the first of its kind in the history of the IAC. ABDGN has nominated IOM to have a seat on this working group and have indicated David Mosca, Director, Migration and Health Division to be the IOM representative.

Further, in December 2011, ABDGN submitted a 3 year proposal to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Network Catalyst grant opportunity entitled “Maximizing ABDGN’s capacity to serve as a Canadian and global think tank on effective responses in HIV/AIDS in African and Black Diaspora populations”. The aim of this project is to maximize ABDGN’s existing capacity to serve as a Canadian and global think tank for the generation of research ideas, priorities, action plans and innovative approaches linked to migration and HIV, as well as serving as a vehicle for knowledge translation and exchange between multiple stakeholders across the Canadian and global regions of the Diaspora. IOM was approached to be a collaborator on this project, along with the Public Health Agency of Canada, ECDC, CDC, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and other esteemed international partners. IOM agreed and provided a letter of collaboration that was included with the final submission.

Over the span of 3 years we have seen an increasing partnership between ABDGN and IOM, and we see our request for observer status as recognition of this emerging and dynamic relationship between the two organizations. We know the work of ABDGN without the support and involvement of IOM would limit the potential of the network to make effective change at country, regional and global levels. The shared and complimentary goals, priorities and objectives of IOM and ABDGN are a reflection of the rich opportunities for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and action planning that vulnerable populations like migrant and mobile populations will benefit from in the short and long term. We hope this request is met with success and look forward to continued partnership building opportunities with IOM that inspire and sustain a global movement that recognizes the valuable contributions of migrant and mobile populations in the development of coordinated responses to address health and human rights.

[Complimentary ending]

Annex II

**LETTER DATED 11 JUNE 2012 FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION TO THE
CO-CHAIRS OF THE AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORA
GLOBAL NETWORK ON HIV AND AIDS (ABDGN)**

Madam, Sir,

I would like to refer to your letter of 5 January 2012, conveying the desire of the African and Black Diaspora Global Network on HIV and AIDS (ABDGN) to seek observer status with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

I have taken note of the ABDGN's commitment to migration issues, particularly in the area of migrant health and human rights. I further note the increasing cooperation between IOM and ABDGN, particularly with regard to global advocacy on migrants' equal access to health and HIV services, as well as possible future collaboration on programmes and activities of mutual interest.

The necessary action will be taken for the inscription of your request on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the IOM Council, to be held in Geneva from 27-30 November 2012. An appropriate document formally presenting your application will be distributed to all IOM Member States and Observers in the near future. You will receive a copy of this document, together with further details and procedural information concerning the Council session.

It gives me great pleasure to receive your request for observer status. Allow me therefore to express my satisfaction at the prospect of furthering the relationship between our two organizations.

[Complimentary ending]