



# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS  
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS  
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN  
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND  
BEYOND

## WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

### BACKGROUND

#### **Country Statistics**

The estimated population of Trinidad and Tobago is 1.2 million people, with an average life expectancy of 71 years. English is the official language of Trinidad and Tobago, which has an estimated literacy rate of 99%, with even distribution between men and women. The GDP per capita is \$18,600. The country is one of the most prosperous in the Caribbean, thanks largely to petroleum and natural gas production and processing. Oil and gas account for about 40% of the GDP and 80% of exports, but only 5% of employment. The country is also a regional financial center, and tourism is a growing sector, although it is not proportionately as important as in many other Caribbean islands.

#### **HIV/AIDS Statistics**

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population is estimated at 1.5%, with 13,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. Currently, the Caribbean region has the second highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world. Cultural beliefs, a diverse and migratory population, commercial sex workers, tourism, and other concerns have fostered a climate that contributes to the increasing rate of infection. The stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS are also significant problems in the country.

#### **Military Statistics**

The Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force (TTDF) consists of approximately 3,000 personnel. Trinidad and Tobago allocates 0.3% of the GDP for military expenditures. No estimates of military HIV prevalence rates are available.

## PROGRAM RESPONSE

### **In-Country Ongoing Assistance**

DHAPP has been collaborating with the US MLO, USMHRP, and the TTDF on building its HIV/AIDS program.



## OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Funds were sent to the US MLO during FY08 to support activities in CT and strategic information. USMHRP continued efforts to conduct a KAP survey among the TTDF. The study is likely to occur in FY09. No CT activities occurred in FY08 but some will begin in FY09. In addition, USMHRP assisted the TTDF with a draft version of its HIV policy. The finalized version is expected to be signed in FY09.

### **Proposed Future Activities**

The US MLO and USMHRP will continue to support the program for the TTDF in FY09. Representatives from the TTDF will attend the *Defense Institute for Medical Operations 8th Annual HIV/AIDS Strategic Planning and Policy Development Course* in San Antonio, Texas, in December 2008. USMHRP will launch a seroprevalence study among the TTDF and expand CT services. DHAPP looks forward to continued progress in the fight against AIDS with the TTDF.

