DECLARATION

We the participants representing various enterprises, workers' and employers' organisations and civil society at the seminar on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, organised by the Federation of Employers Associations of Seychelles, in collaboration with Seychelles Federation of Workers Union, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Health, International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), held at the Exile Club, Cable & Wireless, Victoria, Mahe from 25th to 27th March 2002.

Hereby declare that:

- HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue but a socio-economic and development challenge which requires multi-sectoral approach, leadership support, the will and commitment of all stakeholders in order to respond to it effectively.

- HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue, and should be treated like any other serious illness/conditions in the workplace.

- There should be no discrimination against any worker on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.

- It is well recognised that women are more likely to become infected and more often adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic than men due to biological, social, cultural and economic reasons. Therefore more equal gender relations and the empowerment of women are needed. These are vital to successfully prevent the spread of HIV infection and enable women to cope with HIV/AIDS.

- The work environment in the Seychelles should be healthy and safe for all workers in order to prevent the transmission of HIV.

- We also recognise that the successful implementation of HIV/AIDS policies and programmes require co-operation, collaboration and trust between employers, workers and their representatives and government. Therefore, social dialogue should be encouraged in order to promote and successfully implement prevention, protection and impact mitigation programmes related to HIV/AIDS.

- HIV/AIDS screening should not be required of job applicants, persons in employment, migrants, and persons applying for overseas jobs or seeking admissions in overseas institutions of higher learning.
• Job applicants or workers should not be asked to disclose their HIV-related personal information. Neither should co-workers be obliged to reveal such personal information about fellow workers.

• HIV infection should not be a cause for termination of employment. As with any other conditions, person with HIV-related illnesses should be able to work as long as medically fit in available, appropriate work.

• HIV infection is preventable. Efforts should be intensified for the prevention of all means of transmission through a variety of implementable strategies which are appropriately targeted to national conditions and which are culturally sensitive.

• Solidarity, care and support should guide the national response to HIV/AIDS in the world of work. All workers, including workers with HIV, are entitled to affordable health services and appropriate social protection. There should be no discrimination against them and their dependants in access to and receipt of benefits from statutory social security programmes and occupational schemes.

We therefore propose the followings as the way forward:

- Setting up of a task force to draft a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS using the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work as a guide, which will be incorporated into the National Strategic Plan.

- Development of a five year strategic plan which will include time-bound action programmes addressing various issues regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace, highlighting the impact of HIV/AIDS on specific sectors of the national economy such as hotel, catering and tourism and maritime including fishing.

- Since the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in the country is still considered relatively low, efforts should be concentrated on prevention methods such as Information, Education and Communication (IEC) as well as encouragement of voluntary counseling and testing.