



## Environmental Policy

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### **Background:**

It is widely recognized that environmental issues and poverty are interrelated. Impoverished communities and households are often driven to use the environment in unsustainable and destructive ways when they have no alternatives for survival. By the same token, environmental degradation, whether it be pollution, soil erosion, loss of genetic diversity or contamination, causes disproportionate harm to the poor, and often causes deepening of poverty. Environmental issues are of particular importance to disadvantaged groups (e.g. women, people living in rural areas) who depend on their natural environments for their livelihoods. Successful development initiatives therefore take social, environmental and financial sustainability issues into consideration.

It was for this reason that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act was passed into law in 1992 with the goal of “anticipating and preventing the degradation of environmental quality and at the same time ensuring that economic development is compatible with the high value Canadians place on environmental quality.” The Act requires that environmental assessments be performed on all projects supported by Canadian funds that involve “physical work”.

HIV & AIDS and poverty are also interrelated. HIV & AIDS prevention programs cannot be successful without addressing poverty and poverty will only deepen if something is not done to slow the spread of HIV & AIDS. Therefore, environmental degradation may be caused by HIV-related poverty and the spread and impact of HIV may be accelerated by environmental degradation that deepens poverty,

As such, CAP AIDS is committed to working to ensure that projects implemented by CAP AIDS are environmentally sustainable. Damage to the environment would only serve to fuel the HIV & AIDS pandemic.

By recognizing the importance a healthy environment plays in poverty reduction and therefore in the fight against HIV & AIDS, we will have greater success in reducing, surviving and overcoming the HIV & AIDS pandemic.

### **Policy:**

- 1) CAP AIDS will communicate its commitment to environmental, social and financial sustainability to its partners in Africa, and ask that they consider these issues in their project plans and strategies.

- 2) Where minor negative environmental effects may be anticipated by a particular project activity, CAP AIDS will support partners in identifying and implementing measures to mitigate these effects.
- 3) Project activities that are expected to cause significant harm to the natural or social environment will not be supported.
- 4) CAP AIDS will not support projects involving a physical work that would necessitate an environmental assessment.

This policy has been adopted by the Board of Directors and shall be followed by all staff and volunteers. This policy shall be reviewed and modified by the Board of Directors from time to time.