In West and Central Africa, Ministries of Education, teachers’ unions, and Associations of teachers’ living with HIV can play an important role in supporting infected and affected teachers. West and Central Africa has a number of post-conflict/in-conflict countries that require specific attention and response. Furthermore, while many countries have HIV policies in the education sector, these policies are not always implemented.

The Accra meeting on 24-26 April will address these specific challenges with the aim of strengthening teachers’ role in contributing to prevention efforts in the region. The objective is to ensure that teachers living with HIV can be supported through effective policies and programmes, protecting them from HIV-related stigma and discrimination as well as ensuring access to prevention and care.

The event is the result of the strong partnership established between Ministries of Education, UNESCO, ILO, the World Bank, UNAIDS, WHO, Education International (EI), and PCD (Partnership for Child Development) – It will bring together existing national associations of teachers infected and affected by HIV in WCA, HIV focal points of the Ministries of Education, teachers’ unions and key national and international stakeholders.

Taking stock of past initiatives and practices, the meeting will:

1. Establish a plan of action highlighting areas of work between teachers’ unions, MoE and HIV positive teachers’ associations
2. Develop a policy framework on HIV in the education sector to reflect the Recommendation 200, 2010 and aimed at protecting the rights of teachers infected and affected by HIV in West and Central Africa
3. Create sub-regional network of associations of teachers living with HIV

The meeting will adopt a mix of experience sharing, case studies and working groups. The focus will be on:

1. Analysis of the existing support and needs related to teachers infected and affected by HIV in West and Central Africa
2. Review of existing workplace policies and programmes in the education sector
3. Analysis of the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in West and Central Africa

It is critical that AIDS responses in the education sector are inclusive of the different stakeholders that operate in the sector, to ensure the needs of different beneficiaries are considered. Institutional frameworks as well as concrete actions need to be put in place with clear roles established at country and regional level. It is in this spirit that the meeting will result in three days of consultations and decision making.