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GROUPS WELCOME GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TB AND MALARIA, CALL FOR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE OF DONORS TO ADDRESS FUNDING CRISIS

TORONTO/OTTAWA, December 9, 2011 — Canadian civil society organizations working for global public health and human rights welcome yesterday's statement from the Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, reaffirming Canada's support of and commitment to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria — and to disbursing Canada's annual commitment to the Global Fund by the end of December. We are pleased that Canada will honour its pledge to the Global Fund, which has saved millions of lives and prevented untold suffering in only a decade of operation.

However, even with Canada's current contribution, the Global Fund remains in a precarious position. Donors have failed to deliver more than US\$2 billion in previously-committed funding. (Consider that military spending by the U.S. amounts to US\$1.9 billion *a day*.)

Canada's pledge amounts to 8 percent of the current shortfall facing the Global Fund, and delivering on that pledge without delay will help. But the gap remains. Last month, this funding crisis forced the Global Fund to cancel its next round of funding and to contemplate excluding some countries facing serious HIV pandemics. This will undoubtedly result in lives lost, just as we stand on the precipice of stopping the AIDS pandemic once and for all. We therefore urge Canada to actively encourage other donors to follow suit and meet their own commitments to the Global Fund without further delay.

But even the very modest amounts pledged — and still to be delivered — fall short of what is needed to turn the tide on AIDS globally. Indeed, total pledges to date come to just over half of the US\$20 billion needed to properly scale up testing and treatment for HIV, TB and malaria. We urge Canada and all donor countries to meet this challenge, while front-loading their current pledges. Given the looming public health crisis, organizations around the world are calling for an emergency meeting of donors, before

next year's International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C., to close the gap on the Global Fund's shortfall and chart a course for sustaining this life-saving work in the years ahead.

We urge Canada to commit to attending this emergency meeting and to take leadership by increasing its contribution to the key multilateral body successfully supporting the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria. At this time, Canada's pledged support for the Global Fund is \$180 million over each of the next three years. This comes to just over \$5 per Canadian per year, one-third the price of a movie ticket or the price of a gourmet coffee. We think Canadians can and want to do more to save millions of lives.

We note that Canada's current focus on maternal and child health is directly in keeping with the important work of the Global Fund: AIDS, TB and malaria are robbing the world of millions of mothers and children each year.

We must remember that political will and dollars to back that will are of the utmost importance. Canada has an opportunity to show leadership in the global fight to stem the tide of these three pandemics — and, in this fight, Canadian civil society stands ready to back the Government of Canada in doing its part to rally the international community.

Link to Minister Oda's statement (Dec 8, 2011): <http://bit.ly/ufonPA>

Link to opinion piece in Toronto Star (Dec 8, 2011): <http://bit.ly/ruagVD>

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