



NEW OPPORTUNITY TO FIX CANADA'S ACCESS TO MEDICINES REGIME: STATEMENT BY CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

For immediate release

Également disponible en français

Thursday, February 16, 2012 – We welcome today the introduction of Bill C-398, a critical humanitarian bill to reform Canada's flawed Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR). After nearly eight years of waiting for Canada to deliver on its pledge to help get more affordable medicines to African and other developing countries, Parliament once again has an important opportunity to enact meaningful change on the global stage by saving lives and ending needless suffering worldwide.

In 2004, Parliament unanimously passed legislation creating CAMR, with the laudable goal of ensuring access to affordable essential medicines to the world's poor. Unfortunately, CAMR in its current form has failed: in nearly eight years, it has resulted in only *one* licence being issued to authorize the export of *one* order of *one* AIDS drug to *one* country (Rwanda). There is little prospect that it will get used again unless it is fixed.

Bill C-398 will streamline CAMR by cutting the current regime's unnecessary red tape that has made it so difficult to use. Central to the bill's proposed amendments is the introduction of a "one-licence solution," which would allow a generic manufacturer to obtain a single licence for a given pharmaceutical product; this would allow manufacturers more flexibility to supply eligible countries with medicines as their needs for medicines for HIV or other public health problems evolve over time.

The need for access to affordable medicines is as urgent as ever. In the developing world, 15 million people with HIV need treatment under international guidelines from the World Health Organization. Latest estimates are that only 6 million — or 40 percent of those in need — are receiving it. For children with HIV, access to treatment is even worse. Roughly half of all children born with HIV will die before reaching their second birthday if they don't have the medicines they need. The majority of these deaths are preventable and Canada can help prevent them — provided there is the political will to help make medicines available to those in need by fixing a broken CAMR to supply generic medicines at more affordable prices.

CAMR reform has the support of medical and legal experts, human rights organizations, physicians, faith leaders, health activists and international aid workers both across Canada and internationally. Dozens of prominent Canadians have also supported the need for CAMR reform, and 80 percent of the public supports fixing CAMR according to a national opinion poll.

Furthermore, in the last Parliament, a bill to fix CAMR with the "one-licence solution" passed through the House of Commons with a large majority, including support from MPs belonging to all parties, before it ran out of time in the Senate when the election was called. With the introduction of today's bill, those reforms are again before the House of Commons — and supporters of fixing CAMR now have the opportunity to finally get the job done.

We look forward to welcoming a similar piece of legislation in the Senate of Canada. We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Members of Parliament and Senators from all parties who have supported the need for CAMR reform and have worked hard to put this legislation forward. Access to affordable medicines remains an important humanitarian issue that transcends partisan politics. All Parliamentarians and all parties should be united in supporting sensible reforms to streamline CAMR and make it work.

Endorsed by:

AIDS Saint John
Bracelet of Hope
Canada Africa Partnership on AIDS (CAP/AIDS)
Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN)
Canadians for CAMR
Canadian Hemophilia Society

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH)
Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC)
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR)
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE)
Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida
(COCQ-SIDA)
Dignitas International
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)
Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)
Oxfam Canada
People's Health Movement Canada
Plan International Canada
Positive Living BC
RESULTS Canada
The CTN - CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network
UNICEF Canada
United Church of Canada
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)
Victoria AIDS Resource & Community Service Society (VARCS)

The call to fix CAMR has also been endorsed by:

2-Spirited People of the First Nations
Access AIDS Sudbury
Action Canada for Population and Development
Africafiles
African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
Africans in Partnership Against AIDS
AIDS Action Now!
AIDS Bow Valley
AIDS Calgary Awareness Association
AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton
AIDS Committee of Chatham-Kent
AIDS Committee of Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo and Area
AIDS Committee of London
AIDS Committee of Ottawa
AIDS Committee of Toronto
AIDS Committee of Windsor
AIDS New Brunswick
AIDS Program South Saskatchewan
AIDS Saskatoon
AIDS Thunder Bay
Alberta Community Council on HIV

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
ANKORS: Kootenay AIDS Service
Asian Community AIDS Services
The Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
Blood Ties Four Directions Centre
British Columbia Nurses' Union
BRAS Outaouais
Bruce House — Ottawa
Bureau Regional d'Action SIDA (BRAS)
Central Alberta Addictions Consortium
Canada Africa Community Health Alliance
Canadian Association of HIV Research
Canadian AIDS Society
Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Canadian Auto Workers Canada
Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
Canadian Coalition on HIV/AIDS and Youth in Africa
Canadian Council for International Co-operation
Canadian Crossroads International
Canadian Federation for Sexual Health
Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
Canadian Feed The Children
Canadian Hunger Foundation
Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR)
Canadian Public Health Association
Canadian Support of Rural African Initiatives
Canadian Union of Public Employees
CARE Canada
Carleton University AIDS Awareness Society
Center for International Studies and Cooperation
Centre for International Health
City of Prince Albert
Commission de la sante et des service sociaux des premieres Nations Quebec et
 Labrador
Conception Bay North AIDS Interest Group Inc.
CUSO
Defence for Children International Canada
Healing Our Spirit
Help Lesotho
Hiiye'yu Lelum Society
HIV North Society
HIV Network of Edmonton Society
HIV Society of Southeastern Alberta
Hummingbird Kids Society
International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)

KAIROS – Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Maison Plein Coeur
Manitoba Nurses' Union
Mennonite Central Committee
National Congress of Black Women's Foundation
National Union of Public and General Employees
New Brunswick Nurses Union
New Heights Community Health Centres
Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses' Union
Northern AIDS Connection
North-South Institute
Nova Scotia Nurses' Union
Oasis Health Centre
Ontario Council for International Cooperation
Ontario First Nations HIV/AIDS Education Circle
Ontario HIV Treatment Network
Ontario Nurses' Association
People to People Aid Organization (Canada) Inc.
Positively AFRICA
Positive Women's Network
Primate's World Relief and Development Fund
Prince Edward Island Nurses' Union
Public Service Alliance of Canada
Rights & Democracy
Sandy Hill Community Centre
SIDALYS
SHARP FOUNDATION
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses
Save the Children Canada
SIDACTION (Trois-Rivieres)
Stella
STOP TB Canada
Students Against Global AIDS
The Marquis Project
Tsewulhtun Health Center Cowichan Tribes
Transition House Association of New Foundland
Transition House Association of Nova Scotia
Union for Improved Services, Communication, and Education
Unité de recherche en santé des populations
United Nurses of Alberta
United Steelworkers
YWCA Canada