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The National Advocacy Committee
Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign
Comité d'action national
Campagne de grands-mères à grands-mères



Statement Énoncé

For immediate release

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Bill C-393: Common sense versus obstructionism and excuses during today's Parliamentary debate

We would like to thank those MPs who rose in the House of Commons today to speak to Bill C-393, a critical humanitarian bill with the power to reform Canada's failed Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) — and, most importantly, to save lives and end needless suffering worldwide. Thank you particularly to those who actively and vocally support Bill C-393, and who understand the rare opportunity before Canadian Parliament to enact meaningful change on the world stage.

We are compelled to refute the gross inaccuracy put forward today by certain MPs that CAMR works — “. . . though not with the speed and efficiency many . . . would want” — and does not need changing. One licence to export one drug to one country one time only, over the course of six years, does not even come close to constituting success. In fact, when one considers the millions who have died of treatable illness since CAMR was first passed in 2004, it is profoundly disrespectful to label CAMR anything but an abysmal failure. Successful legislation is legislation that works in real-world practice, which is what Bill C-393 will accomplish by streamlining and strengthening CAMR.

We also call into serious question the proposed four-year “sunset clause” amendment now before Parliament, which is prohibitively short — particularly in any development context — and will severely limit the potential of Bill C-393 to do real-world good. Indeed, the very idea that we would revert to an unworkable and broken CAMR — the CAMR we have now — seems counter to what Bill C-393 is trying to accomplish. In four years, people will continue to require life-saving drugs; their needless suffering is not subject to any “sunset clause” whatsoever.

Finally, while the issue of transfer of sponsorship did not surface today in the House, there is still no commitment from the Conservative Party that they will allow this procedural technicality to take place without instance. The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, and Canadians across this country ask again for this assurance that democracy will prevail and that Bill C-393 will be allowed to go to a final vote.

With more than 45 grandmothers in the Gallery today, along with numerous civil society supporters, we ask that MPs seriously consider the weight of Bill C-393, and seize the opportunity to make real change for mothers, children and communities worldwide. Now is the time to keep our original pledge to the developing world; the entire world is watching.

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