



Envoi par fax

September 23, 2008

Mr. Richard Elliott
Executive Director
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Sir,

Please find attached our responses to the questionnaire that you sent us following the announcement of the 2008 federal elections.

We hope the answers we have provided will help you gain a better understanding of our political program.

Yours sincerely,

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1. Will your party increase funding for Canadian and international research on new HIV prevention technologies, including microbicides and vaccines?

On the one hand, the Bloc Québécois, which works at the federal level, is proposing that Ottawa substantially increase its budget allocations for basic research. Identifying the causes of certain diseases and discovering new palliative and curative treatments can greatly enhance the quality of life of those who suffer from these diseases. For the Bloc Québécois, research offers one of the most promising avenues and must be stimulated.

On the other hand, regarding prevention and support programs, the Bloc Québécois has noted that Québec already provides resources for the fight against HIV within its own health system. Since the government of Québec has exclusive constitutional authority in the area of health care, and is the only body that can intervene in all the institutions that make up the Québec health system, the Bloc Québécois considers that it is up to this government to establish priorities and develop action plans on its own territory. The Bloc Québécois advocates a simple approach to avoid costly duplications: any extra funding provided by Ottawa should be paid directly to Québec and the provinces to allow them to strengthen their own health care systems.

2. Will your party set a binding timetable to deliver on this commitment?

To begin with, please note that we share the same concerns about the need to strengthen public health care systems in developing countries.

On March 21, 2005, Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, published a report in which he states that his three major themes, freedom from want, freedom from fear, and life with dignity, constitute a program that would first require reforms to the organization itself. The Bloc Québécois supports this goal. Health is an integral component of dignity and security.

The Bloc fully supports the objective of allocating 0.7% of the GNP to development aid. We believe that 2015 is a realistic deadline. Admittedly, since 2003 successive governments have increased the budgetary amount for development aid by 8% per year. However, these increases are not enough for Canada to reach its goal of 0.7% of the GNP by 2015. This is why the federal government must substantially increase, each year, the amount allocated to development aid. According to some projections, Canada must increase its budget for development aid by 15 to 18% per year.

3. Will your party commit Canada to contributing, in each of the next five years, five percent of the resources needed to fund developing countries' efforts as identified by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria through its technical review process?

Considering the vast impact of these diseases on the populations of developing countries, we share the desire to fight against them. A healthy population is a population that can fulfill its potential.

We therefore believe that the government must fully engage with the international community in order to fight these diseases. This is why we support without reservation any budgetary increase to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

That said, if the Conservative government had presented a serious and credible plan to reach the goal of 0.7% of the GNP by 2015, Canada would have much more financial resources to allocate to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

4. Will your party streamline Canada's Access to Medicines Regime to create a simple one-license process so that developing countries have access to life-saving medicines through a sustainable and straightforward process?

The Bloc Québécois is well aware of the latest developments concerning Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, better known under the Jean Chrétien Pledge to Africa Act. The Bloc Québécois will carefully monitor the results of this first experience in Rwanda, and will ask the Committee, in due course, to look at problems with the current mechanisms.

5. Will your party commit to restoring full funding, at the level of at least \$85 million per year, to the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada?

The Bloc Québécois questioned the government, starting in November 2007, about its cuts to the fight against AIDS. The Bloc Québécois will remain vigilant and uncompromising on this subject and will call the government to account as long as it does not give this issue the importance it deserves.

6. Will your party commit to supporting harm reduction services, including supervised injection facilities, as one important component of an overall federal strategy on drugs and as part of efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) associated with unsafe injection drug use?

The Supreme Court of British Columbia concluded that InSite was a health service to which drug addicts had a right under the *Charter* right to life, liberty and security. Since health care lies within the competence of Québec and the provinces, supervised

injection facilities are now under provincial jurisdiction. This is why InSite has remained open in spite of the Conservative government's desire to treat InSite in accordance with its own federal anti-drug strategy.

The Bloc Québécois acknowledges the positive aspects of harm reduction services. However, these services are now recognized as medical centres and it is up to Québec and the provinces to evaluate and authorize treatments as well as Québec health care institutions. Québec has the authority and competence to open supervised injection facilities as part of the solution to mental health and addiction problems.

7. Will your party implement needle exchange programs in Canadian prisons to stop the spread of deadly viruses and to protect public health?

The Bloc Québécois supports the idea of establishing needle exchange programs in Canada's penitentiaries.