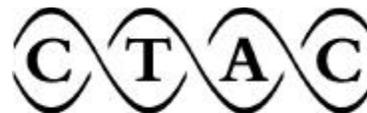


Canadian AIDS Society



Société canadienne du sida



Canadian Treatment Action Council



Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development



Coalition interagence sida et développement



Canadian Association for HIV Research  
l'Association canadienne de recherche sur le VIH



Centre canadien de documentation sur le VIH/sida  
UN PROGRAMME DE  
l'Association canadienne de santé publique



Canadian HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse  
A PROGRAM OF THE  
Canadian Public Health Association

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

November 29, 2001

## **CANADA'S RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS FALLING SHORT DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**

*Canada Signs onto the United Nations' Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS while  
Failing to Meet these Commitments*

NEWS CONFERENCE

World AIDS Day, November 30, 2001 – 11:00 am  
Room 130S, Parliament Hill

OTTAWA— In June 1981, scientists in the United States reported the first clinical evidence of a disease that would become known as Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or AIDS. This World AIDS Day on December 1, 2001 marks twenty years of HIV/AIDS. As activists in Canada and around the world note this important anniversary, they also reflect on a year that has brought both great achievements as well as great setbacks in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

On November 30, representatives from a variety of national and international AIDS organizations will gather on Parliament Hill to hold a press conference to mark World AIDS Day 2001 and to draw attention to some of the challenges Canada faces in the fight against HIV/AIDS, both domestically and internationally.

This year, Canada became a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which was reached at a General Assembly Special Session (GASS) held in New York on June 25 – 27, 2001. Adoption of this Declaration is vitally

important, as it demonstrates international recognition of an escalating global crisis. However, as Michael O'Connor, Executive Director of the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development says, "vastly stepped-up action is required to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada and internationally." The Canadian delegation to the UN Special Session played a vital role in the development of the Declaration. "But thus far, Canada has failed abysmally to live up to its commitments." Mr. O'Connor adds.

During the UNGASS, Secretary General Kofi Annan called on governments to commit \$7 – 10 billion (US) annually to a global fund to fight AIDS. "Canada, despite being one of the seven richest countries in the world, has announced that it would contribute only \$150 million (Cdn), spread over four years," says Ralf Jürgens, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. "Given a Canadian population of about 30 million, this amounts to \$1.25 a year per person – less than the price of a cup of coffee. We demand that Canada put its money where its mouth is."

In addition to failing to live up to its international commitments, Canada is also failing to adequately address the epidemic in Canada. A recent report commissioned by Health Canada determined that Canada's domestic response to HIV/AIDS is neither appropriate nor adequate. The report, entitled *Taking Stock: Assessing the Adequacy of the Government of Canada Investment in the Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS* concludes that additional funding for the federally-funded Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS (CSHA) is important and necessary by any measure of adequacy. "Federal funding for HIV/AIDS has not increased since the early 90s, while the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS has doubled, and more than 4,000 Canadians are being infected yearly," says Sharon Baxter, Executive Director of the Canadian AIDS Society. "The funding available has become woefully inadequate in terms of doing what we have to do: increase prevention efforts, provide better care, treatment and support to people living with HIV, step up research, and protect the rights of all infected and affected Canadians," Ms. Baxter adds.

"By becoming a signatory to the UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, Canada pledged to provide the political will and the financial resources needed to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic both domestically and internationally," Louise Binder, Chair of the Canadian Action Treatment Council concludes. "Today, we call upon the Canadian government to show true commitment, in deed not just in word, to effectively responding to HIV/AIDS, at home and internationally."

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