



# News Release Communiqué

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

For immediate release

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## **DR. JAMES ORBINSKI, STEPHEN LEWIS AND K'NAAN URGE PARLIAMENT TO PASS BILL C-393**

*International Humanitarian Activists rally in support of  
accessible medicines for all*

**OTTAWA, March 9, 2011** — Just hours before the third reading vote on legislation to reform Canada's broken Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR), international humanitarian activists Dr. James Orbinski, Stephen Lewis and Juno Award-winning artist K'naan visited Parliament Hill today to urge MPs and Senators to support Bill C-393. The proposed legislation would make it easier to get affordable, life-saving generic medicines to people who need them in developing countries.

The three activists were joined by representatives of organizations responding to AIDS in Canada and the developing world in releasing a new Avaaz petition with more than 42 000 signatures of Canadians who support the bill.

"People dying of treatable illnesses — that is not their destiny. It is preventable," says K'naan, the Juno Award-winning artist and humanitarian activist, "and today Canada has the chance to do the right thing."

Passed unanimously by Parliament in 2004, CAMR has been mired in red tape ever since; Bill C-393 will cut through that tape and finally make it workable for developing countries and generic drug manufacturers. Critical to this goal is the "one-license solution", which MPs voted to restore during the final hour of debate on the bill last week.

"The developing world has waited seven years for Canada to keep its promise," says Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. "How many lives have been needlessly lost in that time?"

Added Dr. James Orbinski, co-founder of Dignitas International: “Parliament should make no mistake: the world is watching. This is a test of Canada’s commitment to humanitarianism.”

K’naan, Lewis and Orbinski join the dozens of civil society organizations and 80 percent of Canadians polled who support fixing CAMR.

“We add our voice to all those in desperate need in the developing world,” adds Fanta Ongoiba, Executive Director, Africans in Partnership Against AIDS.

MPs will be voting today — Wednesday, March 9 — at 6:00 p.m. EST on the proposed legislation that international aid workers, human rights organizations, physicians, faith leaders and health activists say will save thousands of lives. If the House of Commons approves Bill C-393, the legislation will go immediately to the Senate and focus will turn to ensuring quick passage of this non-political, humanitarian initiative.

“Parliamentarians have an opportunity to rise above political rhetoric and the misinformation and do the right thing for thousands of people dying of treatable diseases,” says Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.

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