

For immediate release

MAJOR FEDERAL PARTIES RESPOND TO ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE ON AIDS

Liberals, NDP, Greens and Bloc share views on harm reduction, AIDS funding and Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

Toronto, October 1, 2008 — The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network released major federal party responses to its election questionnaire today, reminding Canadians that much still needs to be done, in Canada and around the world, to prevent the spread of HIV and ensure access to treatment. The Liberal Party, Green Party and Bloc Québécois submitted their responses to questions on topics ranging from domestic and international funding to HIV prevention and health services for some of those most at risk — issues that the New Democratic Party also addressed in its platform, released September 28.

“We’re very pleased that four of the five major political parties are taking HIV and AIDS seriously,” said Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Legal Network. “It shows they recognize that the federal government has a key role to play in tackling this epidemic at home and abroad.”

Among the questions posed to the parties in its questionnaire, submitted jointly with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, the Legal Network highlighted three priority issues that have recently attracted some controversy. They are:

- **Reforming Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime**

The law intended to export affordable medicines to developing countries has delivered only once in four years and needs to be fixed if it’s going to ever be used again.

- **Federal AIDS funding**

Despite all-party agreement in Parliament that federal funding for Canada’s AIDS strategy should be gradually increased over five years, last year the federal

government reversed course and began cutting funding for the fight against AIDS — by almost 15 percent in 2007, and the same amount again this year.

- **Harm reduction services to protect health**

Unsafe drug use is a key factor driving the spread of HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) in Canada. Scientifically proven preventive services, including harm reduction programs like needle exchanges and supervised injection sites, protect the lives of people struggling with addiction as well as the public at large.

While the parties that responded to the election questionnaire demonstrated an understanding of the urgency of reducing the spread of HIV infection, in some cases specific details for achieving stated policy goals remain unclear. Of positive note:

- Both the Liberals and the New Democrats committed to quickly improving Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, but did not say explicitly how.

"This issue is also part of a broader debate over Canada's role in the world," said Elliott. "Keeping our legislative promise and doing everything we can to get affordable drugs to developing countries ravaged by AIDS and other viruses should be a top priority — and easy political win — for all parties."

- The Green Party is committed to increasing support to the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada, while the Liberals are willing to engage in discussions with stakeholders over stable, long-term funding.

"The debate on federal funding has been held," said Elliott. "Rather than backsliding, all parties need to keep the original promise of sustained, predictable funding for the education, services and research needed to overcome the epidemic."

- The Bloc, NDP, Greens and Liberals have all backed harm reduction programs, and committed to their expansion — pointing to near unanimity among political parties in Canada on this issue.

"Canada's drug strategy must be rooted in scientific evidence," said Elliott. "From federal government health agencies to UN bodies — all their studies demonstrate that harm reduction programs are effective." He urged all political parties to commit to making future decisions on drug policy that are consistent with the factual evidence.

"We know what's needed to prevent HIV from spreading and to support and care for people living with HIV, their families and their communities," said Elliott. "But we need support from across the political spectrum in order to implement real solutions."

The full questionnaire and the parties' official positions, along with backgrounders on key AIDS issues, can be found at www.aidslaw.ca/election2008.

About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (www.aidslaw.ca) promotes the human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in Canada and internationally, through research, legal and policy analysis, education, and community mobilization. The Legal Network is Canada's leading advocacy organization working on the legal and human rights issues raised by HIV/AIDS.

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For more information, please contact:

Disponible en français

Christopher Holcroft (*English*)
Principal
Empower, for the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Mobile: +1 416 996-0767

Vajdon Sohaili (*English, French*)
Communications Specialist
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Telephone: +1 416 595-1666 ext. 227
E-mail: vsohaili@aidslaw.ca
Website: www.aidslaw.ca



Canadian
HIV/AIDS
Legal
Network | Réseau
juridique
canadien
VIH/sida



September 15, 2008

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, PC, MP
Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition

Mr. Gilles Duceppe, MP
Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Mr. Jack Layton, MP
Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada

Ms. Elizabeth May
Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Re: Your party's position on seven key questions on HIV/AIDS

Dear Sirs and Madam:

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD) are non-partisan, community-based organizations, headquartered in Toronto and Ottawa, respectively. Together, we represent 350 member organizations and individuals across Canada, including frontline AIDS service organizations and people living with HIV/AIDS.

We are writing on behalf of our combined memberships to request your responses to seven key questions on how Canada should be fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, both at home and abroad.

1. Funding HIV prevention research

Currently, for every two people with HIV who go on treatment, five people become infected. In 2007, the Global HIV Prevention Working Group projected that 60 million new cases of HIV will occur by 2015 unless comprehensive HIV prevention is sufficiently increased. Poverty, violence and inequality put women at increased risk of HIV infection. Women require new ways to protect themselves, including microbicides, a class of products designed to reduce the transmission of HIV and/or other sexually transmitted infections that women can control even if they cannot ensure their male partners use condoms. Canada has previously provided important funding to support coordinated global research efforts via the International Partnership for Microbicides and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. Canada can take leadership to stem the spread of HIV and support the development of new prevention technologies.

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

2. Strengthening health systems in developing countries

Achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals, including halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic, requires robust health systems. Canada can help strengthen publicly-funded health systems in developing countries to support HIV treatment, prevention and care by living up to its commitment to increase its official development assistance to 0.7 percent of our gross national income.

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

3. Supporting the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Canada is the eighth largest contributor the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the most effective and innovative multilateral funding mechanisms for scaling up HIV prevention, care, treatment and support in the developing world. The Global Fund supports country-led initiatives approved through a rigorous technical review process. Overcoming the epidemic requires a long-term, sustained effort in these areas. The Global Fund needs to be able to provide ongoing, multi-year support for developing countries' efforts. Canada's support for the Global Fund from year to year must be consistent and predictable.

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?

4. Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

The World Health Organization and humanitarian organizations have highlighted that access to lower-cost, generic medicines — including fixed-dose combination products that simplify complicated AIDS treatment regimens — is critical to scaling up access to AIDS treatment for the millions in the developing world currently lacking access. In May 2004, Parliament unanimously passed legislation creating Canada's Access to Medicines Regime to enable export of lower-cost, generic medicines to developing countries. But it has taken four years to reach the first breakthrough: the Government of Rwanda will soon receive delivery of a key AIDS drug from a Canadian generic manufacturer under this Regime. However, all indications are that this could be the last such use of the law unless it is made more user-friendly. The Regime must be simplified, including replacing the current case-by-case process for licensing and instead require only a single compulsory license authorizing export of lower-cost generic medicines to any of the eligible countries covered by the existing law.

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?

5. Funding the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada

Canada needs an adequately-funded federal strategy on HIV/AIDS, including funding critical for many frontline services and programs that offer HIV prevention and provide care, treatment and support to people infected with HIV and their families and communities. In 2003, all parties in the House of Commons recommended that Canada's federal strategy on HIV/AIDS be enhanced with funding of approximately \$85 million annually. Scaling up over five years, that target was to have been reached in 2008–2009. However, cuts to this funding have been implemented in the last two years. In addition, some funds for strengthening existing and planned programs and services have been diverted to a new initiative on HIV vaccines, an important effort but one that the Standing Committee on Health recognized five years ago warranted separate, additional funding. As a result, funding of the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada is now almost 15% below the level agreed upon by all parties several years ago.

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?

6. Harm reduction services to protect and promote health

Contrary to previous federal policy, Canada's new National Anti-Drug Strategy, launched in October 2007, does not include a commitment to harm reduction, one of the key pillars of a comprehensive response to drugs. In May 2008, a British Columbia court issued a decision granting a constitutional exemption to allow the continued operation of Vancouver's supervised injection site without risk of criminal prosecution of users or staff, and declaring parts of Canada's drug laws unconstitutional to the extent

that they prevent people who use drugs from having access to health services that can prevent death and disease.

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?

7. Protecting prisoners' health to protect public health

Across Canada, federally-funded needle exchange programs successfully reduce the spread of infectious diseases. These programs do not, however, exist inside Canadian prisons. Yet federal government research shows drugs get into prisons despite efforts to block them, that many people in prison have addictions and inject drugs (including by sharing makeshift injection equipment), and that there are high levels of HIV and HCV in prisons. People in prisons have a right to health services needed to protect themselves against such diseases. Because most prisoners eventually return to the community, the health of prisoners is also a broader public health concern. Numerous other countries have had needle exchange programs in prisons for years. Based on numerous studies of such programs, the World Health Organization, the Canadian Medical Association and the Public Health Agency of Canada, have all recommended such programs.

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

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these important issues, and *we thank you in advance for the favour of your response by Monday, September 29.*

We look forward to sharing your answers with our members from coast to coast in a timely fashion during this federal election. Your responses will undoubtedly inform their choices as they cast their ballots.

Sincerely yours,



Richard Elliott
Executive Director
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
600–1240 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2A7
+1 416 595-1666 ext. 229



Michael O'Connor
Executive Director
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and
Development
726–1 Nicholas Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7
+1 613 233-7440 ext. 13

Liberal Party of Canada
81 Metcalfe Street, Suite 400
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M8

September 23, 2008

Richard Elliott
Executive Director
The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
600-1240 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5R 2A7

Dear Mr. Elliott,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party response to your questionnaire.

For more information on the Liberal Party of Canada's vision for Canada, please take a moment to review our platform online at www.liberal.ca. This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities.

On behalf of our Leader, Stéphane Dion, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ferguson, President
Liberal Party of Canada



A Liberal Response to the The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

1. Funding HIV prevention research

Currently, for every two people with HIV who go on treatment, five people become infected. In 2007, the Global HIV Prevention Working Group projected that 60 million new cases of HIV will occur by 2015 unless comprehensive HIV prevention is sufficiently increased. Poverty, violence and inequality put women at increased risk of HIV infection. Women require new ways to protect themselves, including microbicides, a class of products designed to reduce the transmission of HIV and/or other sexually transmitted infections that women can control even if they cannot ensure their male partners use condoms. Canada has previously provided important funding to support coordinated global research efforts via the International Partnership for Microbicides and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. Canada can take leadership to stem the spread of HIV and support the development of new prevention technologies.

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

A Liberal government would take a comprehensive approach to addressing HIV/AIDS that focuses on prevention, care, treatment and support, as well as building capacity in developing countries to fight HIV/AIDS. This includes strengthening health systems and capacity building in developing countries, as part of the global response to the epidemic, and research and development related to the development of an HIV/AIDS vaccine.

As well, a Liberal government would support with funding and other resources coordinated global research efforts in partnership with international organizations to improve research on prevention technologies such as microbicides and vaccines.

2. Strengthening health systems in developing countries

Achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals, including halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic, requires robust health systems. Canada can help strengthen publicly-funded health systems in developing countries to support HIV treatment, prevention and care by living up to its commitment to increase its official development assistance to 0.7 percent of our gross national income.

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

The Liberal Party remains committed to making progress to achieving the 0.7 per cent Millennium Development Goal target. Budget 2005, the last Liberal budget, provided an increase of \$3.4 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) over five years and committed to doubling our ODA budget to over \$5 billion by 2010. Our goal was to maintain an 8 per cent annual increase beyond 2010 and accelerate the projected growth rate as our fiscal situation continued to improve.

Unfortunately the Conservative government has cut back on Canada's ODA – so that it has fallen to 0.28 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2007, down from 0.34 per cent in 2005. At the same time, they have reduced the \$12-billion surplus they inherited from the Liberal government in 2006 so that now Canada is on the verge of a deficit. Liberals are committed to getting Canada back on track with our international commitments, but we are also committed to responsible fiscal management

3. Supporting the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Canada is the eighth largest contributor the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the most effective and innovative multilateral funding mechanisms for scaling up HIV prevention, care, treatment and support in the developing world. The Global Fund supports country-led initiatives approved through a rigorous technical review process. Overcoming the epidemic requires a long-term, sustained effort in these areas. The Global Fund needs to be able to provide ongoing, multi-year support for developing countries' efforts. Canada's support for the Global Fund from year to year must be consistent and predictable.

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?

The Liberal government played a key role in creating the Global Fund in 2001, and Liberals remain strongly committed to it, given the enormous human devastation that diseases such as AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria cause, especially in Africa. At the time the Liberal government left office, our total commitment to this fund was \$525 million.

As of today, the Liberal Party has not announced new funding beyond existing commitments, but we continue to view the Global Fund as an essential part of Canada's international aid contribution.

4. Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

The World Health Organization and humanitarian organizations have highlighted that access to lower-cost, generic medicines — including fixed-dose combination products that simplify complicated AIDS treatment regimens — is critical to scaling up access to AIDS treatment for the millions in the developing world currently lacking access. In May 2004, Parliament unanimously passed legislation creating Canada's Access to Medicines Regime to enable export of lower-cost, generic medicines to developing countries. But it has taken four years to reach the first breakthrough: the Government of Rwanda will soon receive delivery of a key AIDS drug from a Canadian generic manufacturer under this Regime. However, all indications are that this could be the last such use of the law unless it is made more user-friendly. The Regime must be simplified, including replacing the current case-by-case process for licensing and instead require only a single compulsory

license authorizing export of lower-cost generic medicines to any of the eligible countries covered by the existing law.

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?

A Liberal government would be in favour of improving Canada's Access to Medicines Regime in order to improve accessibility for those in need of life-saving medicines, particularly in developing countries.

5. Funding the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada

Canada needs an adequately-funded federal strategy on HIV/AIDS, including funding critical for many frontline services and programs that offer HIV prevention and provide care, treatment and support to people infected with HIV and their families and communities. In 2003, all parties in the House of Commons recommended that Canada's federal strategy on HIV/AIDS be enhanced with funding of approximately \$85 million annually. Scaling up over five years, that target was to have been reached in 2008–2009. However, cuts to this funding have been implemented in the last two years. In addition, some funds for strengthening existing and planned programs and services have been diverted to a new initiative on HIV vaccines, an important effort but one that the Standing Committee on Health recognized five years ago warranted separate, additional funding. As a result, funding of the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada is now almost 15% below the level agreed upon by all parties several years ago.

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 Liberal Party of Canada firmly believes that an adequately-funded federal strategy to address HIV/AIDS is a critical step in addressing and preventing the spread of the disease in Canada.

In 2005, the previous Liberal government launched the *Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada*. We doubled the investment in HIV/AIDS programs from \$42 million to \$84 million annually by 2008-2009. In 2005-2006, funding was expected to increase by \$13 million to \$55 million.

The Liberal party of Canada is committed to ensuring that federal funding helps strengthen surveillance, research, and community response and to help to raise public awareness of the seriousness of this disease. We believe that these funds should help ensure that those living with or affected by HIV and AIDS receive the support that they require.

A Liberal government would be willing to engage in discussions and consultations with the provinces and territories, as well as key stakeholders, concerning options for stable, long-term funding for Canada's Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada.

6. Harm reduction services to protect and promote health

Contrary to previous federal policy, Canada's new National Anti-Drug Strategy, launched in October 2007, does not include a commitment to harm reduction, one of the key pillars of a comprehensive response to drugs. In May 2008, a British Columbia court issued a decision granting a constitutional exemption to allow the continued operation of Vancouver's supervised injection site without risk of criminal prosecution of users or staff, and declaring parts of Canada's drug laws unconstitutional to the extent that they prevent people who use drugs from having access to health services that can prevent death and disease.

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 previous Liberal government had invested \$237.7 million over five years to renew Canada's Drug Strategy, which was based on four pillars: prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction.

In 2003, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA) was granted an exemption under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* to launch the supervised injection site (SIS) pilot research project. We also provided \$1.5 million to support the evaluation of the three-year pilot project.

The safe injection site is an example of how harm-reduction and treatment can help the safety and well-being of Canadians at large. We would like to see continued support for the site and its success replicated in other regions across the country where there is desire and support from local communities.

The Liberal Party will continue to encourage and support all levels of government, law enforcement agencies, and professional associations to reduce the harm associated with substance abuse.

7. Protecting prisoners' health to protect public health

Across Canada, federally-funded needle exchange programs successfully reduce the spread of infectious diseases. These programs do not, however, exist inside Canadian prisons. Yet federal government research shows drugs get into prisons despite efforts to block them, that many people in prison have addictions and inject drugs (including by sharing makeshift injection equipment), and that there are high levels of HIV and HCV in prisons. People in prisons have a right to health services needed to protect themselves

against such diseases. Because most prisoners eventually return to the community, the health of prisoners is also a broader public health concern. Numerous other countries have had needle exchange programs in prisons for years. Based on numerous studies of such programs, the World Health Organization, the Canadian Medical Association and the Public Health Agency of Canada, have all recommended such programs.

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

Needle exchange programs, as part of a greater harm reduction strategy, are not only domestically and internationally recognized through scientific studies and reports, but absolutely necessary to address the spread of infectious diseases in Canada.

A Liberal government would support needle exchange programs in our prisons because they don't just help addicts - they also help the broader public health concern.



The Green Party's Position on Seven Key Questions on HIV/AIDS: prepared for the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

1. Funding HIV prevention research

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

The Green Party is committed to proactive solutions to help prevent the dissemination of HIV. We are assured that investments to support coordinated research efforts via the International Partnership for Microbicides and the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative will pay for itself by reducing long-term treatment costs and improving the productivity of future generations of Canadians and global citizens. Consequently, the Green Party would support increased funding for research on new HIV prevention technologies.

2. Strengthening health systems in developing countries

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

The Green Party believes that Canada must meet its commitment to allocate 0.7% of GDP to overseas development assistance (ODA). This level of funding is essential to meet the most basic of goals: to make poverty history, cure disease, foster democracy, and support ecologically sustainable economies. This will make the world a better and safer place for everyone.

We will ensure our commitments for the provision of HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral drugs for Africa is fulfilled, and that Africa will be a significant focus of our development priorities. This will include support for African plans for adaptation to the increasingly devastating impacts of HIV/AIDS coupled with climate change in Africa.

- Increase ODA by 0.05% of GDP (\$650 million in 2007) to reach the target of 0.7% of GDP by 2016.
- Revamp the Canadian International Development Agency to alleviate poverty with an integrated, multi-pronged approach by focusing on (1) developing community-based green economies, (2) strengthening health systems and (3) programmes to mitigate and adapt to climate change, especially strengthening its Partnership Branch for the delivery of ODA.

- Fulfill our commitments for the provision of HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral drugs to Africa.

3. Supporting the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

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?

The Green Party recognizes the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria as a critical mechanism to combat three of the world's most devastating diseases by effectively funneling the financial resources to where it is needed most. The Green Party would support this initiative with resources earmarked from our ODA as part of our commitment to promoting the eradication of these diseases overseas.

4. Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

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?

As part of the Green Party's overseas development initiative, the Green Party will support Canada's Access to Medicines Regime, whilst balancing Canada's trade and intellectual property obligations with the urgency of the humanitarian objective.

5. Funding the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada

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 Green Party is committed to increasing support to the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada, which include programs that will:

- Reduce the stigma associated with having HIV. This stigma is the significant barrier to delivery of effective, non-judgmental prevention and treatment programs.
- Put greater resources into the treatment and delivery of antiretroviral therapies to HIV positive drug users, a marginalized group in Canada which is receiving third-world medical support.
- Put greater resources into harm reduction, prevention and education efforts directed towards high-risk populations.

6. Harm reduction services to protect and promote health

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 Green Party has been a longtime supporter for increased numbers of safe injection clinics and needle exchange programs to help mitigate drug use and the transmission of HIV and HCV.

7. Protecting prisoner's health to protect public health

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

Although the Green Party does not currently have policy to deal with this specific issue, we are committed to supporting socially responsible, pro-active initiatives that promote healthy communities. As such, the Green Party is eager to develop partnerships with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, along with concerned stakeholders, to refine and improve the health of prisoners and the public at large.



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,

Dominic Labrie
Office of the Leader, Bloc Québécois
3730 Crémazie East, 4th Floor
Montréal, Québec
H2A 1B4

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.



September 29, 2008

RE: Questionnaire

Attached please find the response of Canada's New Democrats to your 2008 Election questionnaire. It is the policy of our party to respond on behalf of all New Democrat candidates.

To find out more, we encourage you to consult: www.ndp.ca

Thank you for your interest in the views of Canada's New Democrats on the critical issues facing Canadians.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,



Jack Layton
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

Canadian HIV-AIDS Legal Network / Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development

1. Funding HIV prevention research

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

Prevention must be the cornerstone of any effective HIV/AIDS strategy and research into prevention technologies must be adequately supported. A New Democratic government will work with the research and advocacy communities to ensure that federal support for prevention research – including microbicides and vaccines - is pegged at the highest level.

2. Strengthening health systems in developing countries

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

New Democrats have consistently pressed both Liberal and Conservative governments to increase our pace toward meeting our Millennium Development Goal of 0.7% of gross national income. Under the Harper Conservatives, we have actually lost ground and are even further off target. When we had the opportunity to re-write corporate tax cuts out of the 2005 Liberal budget, we secured an additional \$500 million for international aid. We will, in government, work to ensure we meet our target. We are committed to using rigorous timelines and targets in our attack on poverty at home under our Poverty Elimination Act, and we will apply a similar system to stay on track internationally.

We will further ensure that our international development assistance is not used to force the privatization of recipient nations' public resources, assets or services.

3. Supporting the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

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?

Our New Democrat election platform commits us to tripling Canada's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

4. Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

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?

New Democrats find it totally unacceptable that, four years after Parliament supported the Access to Medicines initiative, medicine has just begun to trickle through. We have called on previous governments for urgent action to get this life-saving medication flowing but to little avail. We have pledged that, in government, we will move immediately to send generic, affordable drugs overseas, as ordinary Canadians intended. We will accomplish this by making whatever adjustments are necessary to overcome the obstacles that have arisen. The Harper Conservatives ignored the route out of the proprietary/bureaucratic/legal morass offered by the Canadian HIV-AIDS Legal Network and suggestions from others. We will examine these closely and act on them quickly.

5. Funding the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada

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?

New Democrats have been outspoken opponents of the Harper Conservative cutbacks to AIDS funding set out in the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada both in the House and confronting the Minister of Health in Committee. We will not break this national promise to Canadians. We will ensure this money is fully restored.

6. Harm reduction services to protect and promote health

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?

New Democrats have consistently supported harm reduction strategies – including supervised injection facilities – as a pillar of our approach to health problems arising from intravenous drug use. We have advocated for harm reduction in Parliament and beyond. This is a science-based public health position. We find the Harper Conservatives' actions in this regard embarrassing and harmful.

7. Protecting prisoners, health to protect public health

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

New Democrats view prisoner needle exchanges as a health issue. Our responsibility to protect the health of Canadians does not stop at the prison gate. We therefore join public health experts and advocates in supporting prison needle exchange programs and, as government, will implement such programs in federal institutions.