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G8 AND G20 LEADERS WILL HEAR STRONG MESSAGE ON HIV AND HUMAN RIGHTS FROM TWO ADVOCATES

Toronto, June 10, 2010 — Two of the world's leading advocates on HIV/AIDS will deliver a strong message to G8 and G20 leaders this Friday evening.

Tomorrow evening, at the Grand Banking Hall in Toronto's financial district, **Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**, will speak to a couple hundred community members, policy-makers, legal professionals, health researchers, activists and people living with or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Some of them attending this free public lecture are delegates registered at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network's 2nd Annual Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights — see information at www.aidslaw.ca/symposium.

It is expected that Dr. Kazatchkine will deliver a pointed message on the critical importance of human rights advocacy in overcoming the global AIDS crisis. Dr. Kazatchkine has spent the past 25 years fighting AIDS as a leading physician, researcher, administrator, advocate, policy-maker and diplomat — see further background at <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/secretariat/director/>.

The evening will also honour the Canadian recipient of the **2010 Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights**, an award presented jointly each year by the Legal Network and Human Rights Watch.

The Award is being bestowed on **Ralf Jürgens**, a lawyer with a long history of advocacy on AIDS and human rights in most regions of the world. Ralf co-founded the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and served as its Executive Director from 1998 to November 2004. Since December 2004, he has worked as a consultant and human rights advocate on HIV/AIDS, health, policy and human rights in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and Canada, including for the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Open Society Institute, UNAIDS, WHO and most recently the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Ralf is a member of the UNAIDS Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights and of the Leadership and Accountability Committee of the upcoming 2010 International AIDS Conference (July 18-23 in Vienna).

The author of many reports and over 100 articles on legal and human rights issues related to HIV, and the instructor in the first course on AIDS and the law ever to be offered at a Canadian university, Ralf has dedicated himself for more than 25 years to ensuring respect and protection for the human rights of some of those who are most socially marginalized and most affected by HIV from Russia to the Ukraine to Canada. In particular, he continues to be a staunch and persuasive advocate for the human rights of people in prison and people who inject drugs, two groups most heavily affected by HIV and whose human rights are routinely violated, in Canada as elsewhere.

This year is the target date set by G8 countries for achieving “universal access” to HIV prevention services and to HIV care, treatment and support. As Canada hosts the G8, these two experts and advocates, with more than half a century of combined experience working in Canada and globally, will address some of the challenges that must be faced by Canada and other world leaders if we are to succeed in overcoming HIV/AIDS.

- 30 -

About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Since 1992, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (www.aidslaw.ca) has been promoting 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.

For more information and to arrange interviews:

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