

Elementary Teachers Call on Prime Minister to Fight HIV/AIDS

August 15, 2006

Delegates to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) 2006 Annual Meeting voted overwhelmingly today to call on Prime Minister Harper to join in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

Specifically they endorsed the Four Steps for Canada Campaign and called on the Prime Minister and the government of Canada to:

- Meet its commitment to funding for HIV/AIDS in Canada;
- Meet its commitment to making medicines affordable to developing countries;
- Increase its spending on foreign aid to support prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in developing countries; and
- Cancel the debts of developing countries so that those resources can be freed up to fight HIV/AIDS and poverty.

"It is urgent," said Emily Noble, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, that our government address this global crisis. Elementary teachers and education workers know the effect that HIV/AIDS has on adults and children here in Canada, and around the world. Our members will be watching and holding the government accountable."

Over 58,000 people in Canada are infected with HIV. Some of them have children in our classrooms. Some of them are the brothers and sisters of our members. All of them live in our communities. Teachers work every day to confront the issues that give rise to HIV/AIDS. ETFO, through its Humanity Fund, supports the Stephen Lewis Foundation and donated over \$60,000 last year to the foundation.

Education International has created a Teachers' Training Programme on HIV/AIDS prevention in the schools in cooperation with the World Health Organization. To date, more than 133,000 teachers in more than 25,000 schools in 17 countries have been trained.

"We are proud to join with teachers around the world in aggressively working to rid the world of HIV/AIDS," Noble said.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario's 2006 Annual Meeting continues until Thursday, August 17, 2006 at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel in Toronto.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario represents 70,000 public elementary teachers and education workers across Ontario and is the largest teacher federation in Canada outside Quebec.