



NUPGE urges Harper to 'keep the promise' on World AIDS Day

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Ottawa (30 Nov. 2007) – World AIDS Day, observed Dec. 1 each year, is dedicated to raising awareness of the global AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. This year the World AIDS day theme, *Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise*, has special resonance in Canada, where the Harper government appears to be wavering on a key domestic funding promise and leadership on the global stage continues to falter.

In 2003, as part of its national strategy on HIV and AIDS, the Government of Canada announced it would double the annual funding for HIV/AIDS over a five-year period to \$84.4 million. The funding is used by community-based organizations to provide essential services to people living with HIV/AIDS and to deliver prevention programs. It was a promise that literally makes a difference between life and death for many people living with HIV/AIDS in Canada.

But many community and national HIV/AIDS organizations are concerned that the promise may be broken by the Harper government. They point out that the federal government is under pressure to find money to fund a new vaccine initiative and to achieve savings under a government-wide program review.

Canada has an obligation

“There are hundreds of organizations working tirelessly to provide essential HIV/AIDS services in communities across Canada,” says **James Clancy**, president of the National Union of Public and General Employees. “These organizations, and the people they help, need and deserve a clear commitment from the federal government that their funding will not be cut.”

Clancy is also urging the Harper government to show leadership and take decisive action in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

“Canada has made many promises on the world stage, but the federal government has not matched the rhetoric with action,” said Clancy. “Canada has the means and the moral responsibility to do more in the global fight against AIDS.”

The National Union is calling on the Harper government to take four steps that would ensure Canada is doing its part on the world stage:

- Announce renewed and increased funding for the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS.
- Invest in the public health care systems of developing countries.
- Cancel the debts of developing countries to free up resources to fight HIV/AIDS and poverty.
- Follow through on commitments made in the *Jean Chrétien Pledge to Africa Act* to make medicines affordable to developing countries. *NUPGE*