

May 30, 2006

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean
Governor General of Canada
Rideau Hall
1 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A1

Excellency:

Attached, please find a copy of a recent letter from the Canadian Council of Churches addressed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Since this letter represents the combined wisdom of the member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches we thought the content of the letter, responding to the HIV AIDS pandemic, might interest you. The Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) is the largest ecumenical body in Canada, now representing 20 churches of Anglican, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions.

Canadian churches have been active in advocacy campaigns leading up to the 2006 International AIDS Conference to be held in Toronto this August, suggesting that there are several upcoming opportunities for the Canadian government to demonstrate leadership in this area.

In addition the Governing Board of the CCC, which is made up of senior representative of member churches who together represent 85 per cent of Christian Canadians who profess adherence to a church, has recently invited all our churches to

- shun all prejudice toward people with HIV,
- root out social stigma and discrimination against all people living with HIV/AIDS,
- support all who dedicate themselves to caring for people living with HIV and AIDS,
- promote all kinds of appropriate behaviours that prevent the spread of the virus,
- work to make lifesaving medicines accessible to all who need them, and to
- work to cancel the debt of countries with high prevalence of HIV rates (recognizing that poor economic circumstances are a powerful determinant in the quality of life of an HIV patient).

From August 10 to 12, the Canadian Council of Churches will be hosting, together with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance based in Geneva Switzerland, a major international pre-conference where more than 450 delegates from faith communities around the world will be gathering under the theme, *Faith in Action: Keeping the Promise*. A conference program is attached.

Should your schedule permit your attendance at this event, we would gratefully welcome you to join us. Should your schedule not permit your attendance, we would welcome a special note of greeting. Please have your protocol officer contact me at telephone number 416-972-9494 extension 22.

Thank you. Please be assured of our continued prayers for you and your work.

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton
General Secretary