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### **Conservative Government has Failed on AIDS Announcement**

OTTAWA - The Conservative government is still "Missing in Action" on a plan to address the AIDS pandemic, Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic Dr. Keith Martin and Health Critic Dr. Ruby Dhalla said today.

"Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised to announce a plan to combat AIDS after the World AIDS conference in Toronto, but three months have passed and there is no announcement in sight," said Dr. Martin.

"Embarrassingly for Canadians, the Prime Minister didn't attend this conference, and he continues to embarrass Canadians by avoiding any meaningful commitment to the 40 million people infected with HIV worldwide," said Dr. Dhalla.

Third party groups and experts have been calling on the government to commit to the victims of HIV/AIDS. There are many ways that Canada could help victims here at home and around the world, including the 14 million orphans left in the disease's wake.

"To help with the fight against AIDS abroad, Canada could champion the care of orphans and maternal care, as no other country has stepped into this key role. Simple strategies such as providing anti-retroviral drugs for pregnant women can dramatically decrease the likelihood that the disease is passed from mother to child," said Dr. Martin.

Dr. Dhalla also called on Prime Minister Harper to take action to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Canada. "Every two hours a Canadian is infected with HIV. The Prime Minister must provide the leadership and resources necessary to achieve the solutions for this global epidemic."

Dr. Martin pointed out that this government's inaction on AIDS is another symptom of the Conservatives' lackadaisical approach to international leadership.

"This government is shirking Canada's international obligations. Their games of

hide-and-seek have cast a pall on Canada's reputation in the global community.

"Canadians do not want their government 'Missing in Action' on yet another crucial issue. This pandemic affects every community in Canada and every country in the world and it requires concrete, urgent action from this government," concluded Dr. Martin.

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