



For Immediate Release
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Dhalla calls on Canada to Act in the fight against HIV and TB

Ottawa- Dr Ruby Dhalla, Member of Parliament for Brampton-Springdale is urging all parties to unite in the fight against HIV and TB.

Yesterday, Dhalla joined the Canadian Grandmothers for Africa and Results Canada in launching a national petition campaign to increase Canada's Official Development Assistance to 0.7%, increase contributions to the Global Fund to fight TB and HIV and improve legislation for the access to medicines in Africa.

Dhalla is committed to working with Results Canada and the Canadian Grandmother's for Africa to improve the lives of those who suffer from HIV and TB. Sub-Saharan Africa has been hit the hardest by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with 22.5 million infected. Currently there are over 13 million orphans, who live in impoverished conditions, many of which are now orphans being raised by their grandmothers.

In addition to the spread of HIV/AIDS across southern African, there is the other, lesser known crisis of TB. One in three people worldwide— almost 2 billion people— are infected with the virus that causes TB. If this disease is diagnosed early it can be treated over a six-month course of medication. While this may sound simple, add in the fact that many infected Africans suffer from damaged immune systems as a result of TB-HIV co-infections, coupled with the fact they live in overcrowded, poorly ventilated spaces, and you have a recipe for a humanitarian crisis.

To bring attention to this growing crisis Dhalla hosted a roundtable entitled ``Ending HIV and TB Co-infection: A Political Imperative.`` Members of Parliament from the Liberal, NDP, and Bloc Québécois parties, as well as representatives from CIDA officials and other advocates attended the meeting. Unfortunately, no Conservative Member of Parliament expressed support for this initiative. The boycott by Conservative MP's at both the press conference and roundtable was most disheartening.

Of especial importance at the roundtable, was the presence of guest speaker Winstone Zulu. A world renowned HIV and TB activist, Mr. Zulu was born in Lusaka, Zambia and diagnosed with HIV in 1990. He became the first individual in Zambia to publicly acknowledge his HIV status. In 1997, he contracted TB and was cured of the disease within that same year. An internationally renowned figure, Winstone has dedicated his

life to meeting with heads of state, members of parliament, and other key individuals in government to help increase the funding and tools needed to end TB and HIV.

Currently the Liberal Critic for Social Development, Dhalla's recent travel to South Africa to learn about TB and HIV has further inspired her commitment to bring awareness about the growing crisis. Her passionate vision for Canada and its future combined with her goal to empower women, youth and seniors have made her a natural leader in the fight against HIV and TB.

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