



**For Immediate Release  
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### **Four Female MP's Unite to Launch the HIV/AIDS and TB Parliamentary Caucus**

Ottawa - With the growing global health challenge of HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis, four female parliamentarians from all political parties have united to create the HIV/AIDS & TB (HAT) parliamentary caucus.

The Caucus was created by Dr. Ruby Dhalla, Member of Parliament from Brampton Springdale to increase awareness of the need for action on HIV/AIDS & TB and to create a forum within parliament for the exchange of ideas related to the needs of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS & TB. The HAT Caucus is also honoured to have co-chairs from all political parties including Newmarket-Aurora MP Lois Brown from the Conservative Party, Laurentides—Labelle MP Johanne Deschamps from the Bloc Québécois, and Halifax MP Megan Leslie from the New Democratic Party, who will join Dr. Dhalla in launching the (HAT) Parliamentary Caucus on June 14, 2010 in Parliament.

"The HAT Caucus is a welcomed initiative" says Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the HIV/AIDS Legal Network. "Law-makers have a key role to play in ensuring that policies, programs and initiatives adopted by Canada play a constructive role in helping prevent the spread of HIV and ensuring access to care, treatment and support for people living with HIV, both here at home and abroad." The Legal Network is co-sponsoring the launch along with the Canadian Treatment Action Council and the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development.

As a non partisan initiative the HAT Caucus endeavours to work with organizations, stakeholders, and individuals to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS & TB in parliament and to promote policies and initiatives for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS & TB.

"The creation of the HAT caucus is a tribute to the survivors, volunteers, advocates, and organizations who work tirelessly to develop solutions to this growing global health challenge. Change for the better can be achieved through our collective and collaborative efforts. I hope the HAT caucus will inspire greater action and results for the people living with HIV/AIDS & TB both in Canada and globally" says Dhalla.

"Far too many lives are being lost to HIV/AIDS & TB. We are committed to working together to improve support and resources for those with these diseases" say co-chairs, Brown, Deschamps & Leslie.

HIV and TB work in a deadly combination: almost one-third of the 33 million people worldwide living with HIV, are co-infected with TB. Without the right medication and treatment, nearly 90 percent of those living with HIV die within months of a TB infection.

The HAT Caucus will be launched by Stephen Lewis, renowned activist and former UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa and Dr. James Orbinski, founder of Dignitas International and former President of Doctors Without Borders.

"The emergence of the HAT Caucus is a significant development on the Canadian political scene. The crisis of AIDS and tuberculosis is not receding; in fact the deadly combination of the two diseases is becoming more and more widespread and intense. The equivalent crisis in funding is not yet recognized. There is a vital role for Canada to play, at the G8 and G20 and beyond," says Lewis.

"The HAT Caucus has emerged because Canadian Parliamentarians recognize that HIV/AIDS and TB are critical global health challenges that must be addressed, regardless of political affiliation. My hope is that through a greater awareness of the challenges faced, our government can take informed, practical and equitable action for the benefit of the global community" says Dr. Orbinski.

The HAT Parliamentary Caucus Launch takes place on June 14th 2010 in Centre Block, Room 238S on Parliament Hill from 6pm-9pm. Join parliamentarians, community leaders, and stakeholders for an inspiring night of advocacy and change.

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For More Information Contact:

Candice Debi  
Dr. Ruby Dhalla  
905 874 6868

Katerine Desforges  
Johanne Deschamps  
613 992 2289

Mark Lucas  
Megan Leslie  
613 995 4492

Heather Tessier  
Lois Brown  
613 992 9310