

4 March, 2010

Dr. David Butler-Jones
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Dr. Butler-Jones,

As advocates for the development of new prevention options against HIV/AIDS, we are writing to encourage Canada's 2009 UNGASS report to prominently note its efforts in supporting the development of urgently needed tools to fight the global pandemic. Canada's leadership in this area is crucial to ensure sustained global support for this vital research, especially at a time of exciting advances in the HIV biomedical prevention field.

We are excited by global progress made towards the Universal Access targets in HIV prevention, treatment, and care, supported in part by significant contributions provided by the Canadian government. However, projections by such groups as the aids2031 consultation have shown that new "game-changing" tools will be needed in order to achieve Universal Access, ensure the ongoing response is sustainable over the long-term and ultimately end the pandemic. We urge Canada's continued global leadership on HIV/AIDS prevention research, especially in a time of constrained budgets.

Canada has been a long standing and strong supporter of important biomedical HIV prevention research, which has contributed to the discovery of new broadly neutralizing antibodies against HIV via a global research network and the completion of vital clinical trials for microbicides in the developing world.

As part of UNAIDS' ongoing effort to measure progress on key indicators in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the Country Progress Reports are a valuable tool to document successes and identify future directions to achieve Universal Access goals. The next round of reporting is expected to be completed by March 31, 2010 and we would like to take this opportunity to urge the monitoring and reporting team composing your submission to include Canada's contributions to HIV biomedical prevention research in the narrative section of the report.

Canada's 2008 report included a discussion of the Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative (CHVI) co-sponsored by the Canadian government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as the Canadian International Development Agency's support of global efforts to develop vaccines and microbicides to prevent HIV infection. For the 2009 report, we encourage the inclusion of such Canadian contributions as:

1. The continued scale-up of the CHVI, which contributes to the global effort toward an AIDS vaccine by supporting crucial discovery and social research, as well as capacity building and clinical trial networks.
2. Support for Canadian AIDS vaccine and microbicide researchers via the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).
3. The Public Health Agency of Canada's sponsorship of the 2009 AIDS Vaccine Conference in Paris, which provided an important platform for future planning around successes in AIDS vaccine science such as the recent RV144 trial results in Thailand.
4. The continued support by the Canadian government of global prevention research efforts such as the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and the International Partnership for Microbicides in order to spur innovative research.

Our organizations are united in our mission to promote the creation of new technologies to end the AIDS pandemic. Again, we applaud Canada's important contributions to these efforts in the past and look forward to moving together with our Canadian partners towards a world without AIDS.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director
Canadian AIDS Society



Nicci Stein
Executive Director
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CC: Tanya Lary, Patricia Hurd