

June 5, 2007

Prime Minister Stephen Harper,

We are writing to you today to convey our deep concern about the fate of three legislative initiatives now before the Senate. If your government decides to prorogue Parliament in the coming days, Canada is in danger of losing three crucial bills: the *Kelowna Accord Implementation Act* (C-292), the *Development Assistance Accountability Act* (C-293), and the *Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act* (C-288).

As you know, each of these bills has completed all stages in the House of Commons with cross-party support. All three have been referred to the Senate, where each bill enjoys the support of a majority of Senators. All they require now is the time to complete the legislative process.

If Parliament prorogues in the coming days, those bills will be – at best – significantly delayed, and could well be lost for good.

Briefly, here are some of the reasons why, in our opinion, these bills matter so much:

C-292: First Nations poverty is the greatest social justice issue in Canada today. The Kelowna Accord, concluded on November 25, 2005, represents a consensus of all governments that a new relationship is required to address and eliminate this poverty. The Accord covers the areas of education, skills development, health care, housing, access to clean water, and employment. Bill C-292 would require the government to take all measures necessary to implement this Accord, and to report to Parliament on their progress in doing so. The Conservative party's election platform in 2006 committed the party to work with First Nations and premiers to achieve the targets set out in that agreement. The majority of elected representatives, and the Canadian public, fully support Kelowna's targets and objectives, which will help improve the quality of life for First Nations.

C-293: For more than a decade, observers both inside and outside the Government of Canada have called for a legislated mandate for Canada's official development assistance (ODA), or foreign aid. Enshrining the mandate for ODA in legislation would focus aid on poverty reduction and heighten accountability to Parliament and to Canadians. Bill C-293 introduces legislation consistent with what MPs from all parties have called for. It would assure parliamentarians and the public that aid resources are directed to the needs of those living in poverty, while respecting human rights obligations.

C-288: Bill C-288 reaffirms Canada's Kyoto obligations in domestic law and creates a legal requirement on the government to produce and implement a credible Kyoto plan. With over 170 countries as parties, the Kyoto Protocol is the only international agreement to set binding targets and timelines to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. Having ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2002, Canada is required to meet its target under international law. Canada can meet its Kyoto commitment if your government combines immediate, strong

action to begin cutting emissions at home with investments in certified emission-reduction projects in developing countries. Kyoto is just a first step, but it's a crucial one, as the window of opportunity to avoid catastrophic climate change is very short.

Prime Minister, you have fought for a greater voice for Members of Parliament throughout your political career. The MPs and Senators who sponsored these bills have worked very hard to build multi-party support for these initiatives, so that a majority of MPs – and, we believe, a majority of Canadians – support their goals.

The bills described in this letter concern some of the most profound questions facing Canada and the world. Please give them the time they need to complete the legislative process and come to a final vote.

Sincerely,

Phil Fontaine
National Chief

Gerry Barr
President/CEO – Canadian Council for International Co-operation
Chair – Make Poverty History Canada

Dr. David Suzuki
Founder, David Suzuki Foundation