

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AIDS 2014 ENDS WITH CALLS FOR UNITING HIV, GLOBAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

WORLD FIGURES ADDRESS THE CLOSING CEREMONY

Friday July 25, 2014 – AIDS 2014, the 20th International AIDS Conference ended in Melbourne, Australia today with a chorus of international figures calling on governments and organisations to step up the pace in terms of delivering universal access to treatment, care and prevention, not only for HIV but for other health issues as well.

At the event's closing ceremony this afternoon, the outgoing president of the International AIDS Society (IAS) and Co-Chair of AIDS 2014 Prof. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi once again honoured the delegates who were killed in the MH17 disaster and called on the world to unite to improve global health. "I strongly believe that we must further increase our collaboration with other major international health movements because our objective is to build a better future for all. This is what global health is about. The mobilization against AIDS is also a strong driver to advance other areas such as human rights. There will be no end of AIDS without ensuring respect and dignity of all people, equity in access to health services and social justice."

The local Co-Chair of the conference, Australia's Prof. Sharon Lewin, also called for increased support and cooperation. "This week, we have heard of all the great progress but that there is still much work to be done. In order for us to change an epidemic to low level infection, we need an individualised approach to address key hot spots; we need a strong focus on specific geographic areas and key affected populations that continue to experience the highest numbers of infections. We need to recognise that one size will not fit all in our response. Now more than ever we need an increase in funding to do it. Now is not the time to slacken the pace."

Delivering the keynote address at the closing ceremony, musician and activist Sir Bob Geldof reiterated comments he made at the conference yesterday about increased funding for HIV programs and services. "I am dismayed that you people, after such great scientific and global health success, still have to beg for cash. On this last mile, on this last hurdle, we cannot allow indifference and incapable governance to stop the final victory, which is coming."

Speaking on behalf of people living with HIV, Australia's John Manwaring urged people from communities affected by HIV to be fearless advocates. "Every day, those of us living with HIV have to contend with fear, and the irrational, often cruel, reactions it incites. But as I've heard people speak over this past week, I have realised an undeniable truth: we are more powerful than we know. When those of us living with HIV come out into the light and share our stories, we dispel the fear, the stigma, and the hate. In their eyes, we are no longer stereotypes and statistics; we are human."

The incoming IAS president, Chris Beyer, said two of the biggest challenges facing the global HIV response were the lack of access to effective treatments for people for millions around the world, and a new wave of discriminatory laws and policies which are excluding people from treatment and care. "I am the first openly gay person to lead the IAS, and as a man who buried too many friends and lovers before we had effective treatment, let me pledge that inclusion for all who need and want HIV services will be a fundamental focus of my leadership."

The next International AIDS Conference will take place in Durban in South Africa in 2016. In her address to the closing ceremony, the local Co-Chair of AIDS 2016 Professor Olive Shisana noted that sub-Saharan Africa still shoulders a vastly disproportionate burden of the HIV epidemic, with high prevalence and mortality. "The past three decades of HIV/AIDS has taught us that the disease doesn't discriminate but that people and governments do. A renewed engagement with decision makers across the continent on the issue of human rights will be unavoidable if we are to move towards ending AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa and build on the huge gains that we've made over the past 15 years. It is my hope that the Durban 2016 International AIDS Conference will drive momentum towards a reinvigoration of the HIV/AIDS response in Africa."

AIDS 2014 brought together 13,600 delegates from over 200 countries to discuss the global HIV response. Former US President Bill Clinton, Sir Bob Geldof, UNAIDS head Michel Sidibé and other international figures joined delegates from the medical, research, government and advocacy sectors as well as representatives from the communities most affected by HIV and AIDS including men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and people who use drugs.

ENDS

Further information:

AIDS 2014 Conference Organization

AIDS 2014 is convened by the IAS and permanent partners the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+); the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO); the International Community of Women with HIV/AIDS (ICW), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Non-permanent partners are the Positive Women's Network and Sidaction.

The Australian based partners are: the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM); and the National Association of people with HIV Australia (NAPWHA).

The Asia Pacific Partners are: The Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW); the AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific (ASAP); and the National AIDS Research of India (NARI).

AIDS 2014 on Social Media

Facebook: www.facebook.com/InternationalAIDSConference

Twitter: @AIDS_conference #AIDS2014

LinkedIn: International AIDS Conference

YouTube: www.youtube.com/iasaidsconference

About the IAS

The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 16,000 members from more than 177 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. The IAS members include researchers from all disciplines, clinicians, public health and community practitioners on the frontlines of the epidemic, as well as policy and programme planners.

The IAS is custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference and lead organizer of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, which will be held in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, 19-22 July 2015.

www.iasociety.org | www.aids2014.org | www.ias2015.org

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