

MEDIA RELEASE

**The International AIDS Society Announces Washington, DC, as
Site of the XIX International AIDS Conference in July 2012**

***Removal of Entry Restrictions on People Living with HIV by the U.S. Allows for
Return of Conference after 22-Year Absence***

30 November 2009 (Washington, DC) — At the White House today, the International AIDS Society (IAS) announced that the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) will be held in Washington, DC, in July 2012. The IAS Governing Council decided to hold AIDS 2012 in Washington, DC, following U.S. President Barack Obama's October announcement that the nation would end its entry restrictions on people living with HIV effective January 4, 2010. The conference was last held in the United States in 1990 in San Francisco, California.

"The return of the conference to the United States is the result of years of dedicated advocacy to end a misguided policy based on fear, rather than science, and represents a significant victory for public health and human rights," said IAS President-Elect Dr. Elly Katabira, Professor of Medicine at Makerere University in Uganda, who will serve as the International Chair of AIDS 2012. "AIDS 2012 will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field, learn from one another's expertise, and develop strategies for advancing all facets of our collective efforts to treat and prevent HIV."

The biennial International AIDS Conference is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV, as well as policymakers, people living with HIV and others committed to ending the epidemic. AIDS 2012 is expected to convene more than 25,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries, including more than 2,500 journalists. The conference will be held from 22 to 27 July 2012 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

"We are extremely pleased that the United States' new entry policy for people living with HIV reflects its key role in global efforts to combat AIDS, and we urge other nations with similar discriminatory policies still in place to follow suit," said IAS President Dr. Julio Montaner, Director of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS in Vancouver, Canada. "U.S. financial contributions have been crucial to our collective progress against AIDS in recent years. The Group of Eight (G8) nations made a bold commitment in 2005 to work towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010 and as the deadline approaches we urge all G8 members to continue to scale up their investments to match the challenges at hand, and fully fund efforts to achieve this goal."

"We are gratified by the enthusiastic support expressed by our U.S. government and civil society partners today for holding AIDS 2012 in Washington, DC," said Dr. Diane Havlir, a member of the IAS Governing Council and Chief of the HIV/AIDS Division at University of California, San Francisco, who will serve as Local Co-Chair of AIDS 2012. "The world's leading AIDS experts will gather for AIDS 2012 in a community deeply impacted by the epidemic, providing a tremendous opportunity for partnership and exchange that will further sow the seeds of solidarity among all of us dedicated to ending this scourge."

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the IAS is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with 14,000 members in 190 countries. The IAS convenes the International AIDS Conference in partnership with a number of international bodies, including UNAIDS, the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, and the International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, as well as local partners, which will be selected at a later date. The next conference (AIDS 2010) will be held from 18 to 23 July 2010 in Vienna, Austria (for more information, visit www.aids2010.org).

The U.S. has hosted three International AIDS Conferences. The very first International AIDS Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1985; the third, of what was then an annual conference, was held in Washington, DC, in 1987; and the sixth in San Francisco in 1990. The 1992 conference was originally slated for Boston but was moved to Amsterdam because of concerns related to U.S. restrictions on the entry of foreigners living with HIV. The IAS Governing Council adopted a policy in 1992 prohibiting it from holding its conferences in countries that restrict short-term entry of people living with HIV and AIDS, and/or require prospective HIV-positive visitors to declare their HIV status on visa application forms or other documentation required for entry into the country.

The IAS works with international partners to track and remove discriminatory HIV entry and immigration laws and policies. These laws do not protect public health, but rather fuel stigma and sustain a culture of exclusion, rights violations and marginalization that impedes an effective response to the epidemic. The IAS maintains a detailed database on HIV-Related Travel Restrictions throughout the world (www.hivtravel.org).

“AIDS 2012 will play a key role in shaping international responses to this devastating epidemic. As with all our conferences, we will work with partners to make sure that the conference has a deep and lasting impact in our host city and country,” said Robin Gorna, IAS Executive Director. “We look forward to partnering with the residents of Washington, DC, and with other groups across the U.S. to ensure the conference further strengthens the U.S. role in global AIDS initiatives, re-energizes the response to the U.S. domestic epidemic, and focuses attention on the particularly devastating impact HIV is having in Washington, DC, and in racial and ethnic minority communities across the U.S.”

HIV and AIDS have a disproportionate impact among racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. The estimated rate of new HIV infections among African Americans in 2006 was seven times the rate among Whites and the rate among Hispanic/Latino Americans was twice the rate among Whites. Three percent of Washington, DC, residents are known to be living with HIV and AIDS – an HIV epidemic is generalized and severe when it reaches 1% in a geographic area. African Americans make up 53% of the population of Washington, DC, but account for 76% of those living with HIV and AIDS. Approximately seven percent of African American men in the city are diagnosed with HIV, and women account for nearly a third of people living with HIV.

An estimated 33.4 million people globally were living with HIV in 2008 with an estimated 2.7 million new HIV infections and 2 million AIDS-related deaths that year. At least 5 million people living with HIV in need of treatment and care do not have access to it, and prevention programmes fail to reach many in need.

The selection of Washington, DC, as the AIDS 2012 venue is also significant as it is home to key players in the global response to AIDS, including the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (which directs PEPFAR – President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), the National Institutes of Health and the World Bank.

Ends

About the IAS

The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with 14,000 members from 190 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. Our 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 the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference, which will next be held in Vienna, Austria, in July 2010.

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