IAS applauds UK All-Party Parliamentary Group’s call to action on AIDS: *The Treatment Timebomb*


In his opening speech to IAS 2009, IAS President Julio Montaner noted the importance of this report, which indicates that by 2030 an estimated 50 million people living with HIV will need new drugs to stay alive. The APPGA report states that, “Only a third of those who need it are on treatment and this treatment will not work for them forever.” The report goes on to say, “Political activism is needed once more to ensure that the next generation of drugs is available to the world's poorest.” The report notes that the only way to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic is to prevent infection, and because the drugs suppress the virus, those receiving treatment are much less likely to pass it on.

“I am truly delighted that the “added preventive value of antiretroviral therapy” also known as “treatment as prevention” is being recognized. Two million people per year should not be dying from HIV-related illness. Continuing levels of new infections when we have the prevention knowledge, tools and technologies are unacceptable,” said IAS President Julio Montaner. “Our challenge for the future is to commit to get an additional 15 million people on HIV treatment by 2015, with updated and expanded treatment options globally, and to dramatically reduce new infections. Let’s be sure that we work together to motivate our political leadership to fulfill this goal!”
The APPGA report proposes several recommendations for moving forward. These findings reflect the research presented at IAS 2009, across basic, clinical, biomedical prevention and operational conference tracks. The key recommendations are to:

- make the most effective current first and second-line treatment options more affordable and widely available for developing countries;
- intensify investments in research and development into new drugs and diagnostics.

The report argues that the Patent Pool being set up by UNITAID offers an important opportunity to achieve these two goals, and calls on pharmaceutical companies to participate in the scheme.

Other recommendations are to:

- harmonize regulatory mechanisms (at global and national levels) to speed up the registration and delivery of new drugs to the markets where they are most needed;
- commit funding for long-term predictable and sustainable financing of the HIV response;
- build developing nations’ capacity for long-term planning, essential research and implementation of programmes beyond 2015.

“HIV treatment today needs to be seen from three critical perspectives: as an emergency for the millions in need of treatment and still not able to access it; as an ongoing need for the four million people currently on treatment who need an uninterrupted supply to treat this chronic condition; and as an important means of preventing or minimizing impact of HIV, and other communicable diseases (in particular tuberculosis) on the individual and on the wider community,” said Craig McClure, IAS Executive Director.

IAS calls for urgent action by all stakeholders, in particular the parliaments and governments of rich countries to live up to the commitments they have made, including the G8 commitment to Universal Access by 2010, and to take action to deliver the
recommendations made in this report to scale up access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

The next International AIDS Conference will be held in Vienna 18-23 July 2010 (AIDS 2010). This conference will bring together over 25,000 of the world’s leading AIDS professionals, including researchers, health care workers, global leaders, activists and the world’s media. With just 17 months to go to achieve the ambitious UN target of “Universal Access to AIDS Treatment, care and prevention” AIDS 2010 will be an important opportunity for the international community to take stock of global and country progress, to mobilize wider support and revitalize action against these critical recommendations.

**Note to Editors:**

The International AIDS Society is the world’s independent professional association of over 14,000 individuals in 188 countries working to reverse the HIV epidemic. For more information contact Ron MacInnis, Director of Policy and Programmes +41-22 79 303 2184, www.iasociety.org.


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