



EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 18 JULY, 14.00 CET

Launch of the Rome Statement for an HIV Cure

Monday, 18 July, 2011 (Rome, Italy) -- Members of the Advisory Board for a global scientific strategy “Towards an HIV Cure” today launched the **Rome Statement for an HIV Cure** calling for an acceleration of HIV cure research. The announcement was made at the 6th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2011) currently being held in Rome.

Recent scientific advances in HIV research have led to a re-emergence of interest and optimism in prospects of at least a functional cure for HIV. The development of a functional cure which, without completely eliminating the virus from the body, would permanently suppress its replication and considerably diminish viral reservoirs, possibly leading to the long-term remission of patients.

Under the auspices of the International AIDS Society, a group of internationally recognized scientists and stakeholders is guiding the development of a global scientific strategy “Towards an HIV Cure”. The strategy aims at building a global consensus on the state of HIV reservoirs research and defining scientific priorities that need to be addressed by future research to tackle HIV persistence in patients undergoing antiretroviral therapy. The strategy will be presented at the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) which will be held in Washington DC from 22-27 July 2012. (1)

The International Scientific Working Group is co-chaired by Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, IAS President-Elect and 2008 Nobel Laureate for Medicine, and Professor Steve Deeks, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and Positive Health Program (AIDS Program) at San Francisco General Hospital. The working group works closely with an advisory board composed of leading advocates and major research stakeholders in HIV cure, including representatives of people living with HIV and funders and clinicians from high prevalence settings. The Advisory Board is co-chaired by Prof. Barré-Sinoussi and Dr. Jack Whitescarver, Associate Director for AIDS Research and Director of the Office of AIDS Research at the National Institutes of Health.

“While there is certainly a high level of interest being expressed about finding a functional HIV cure (2), it can only be achieved through an increased and concerted international effort engaging not only the scientific community but all stakeholders involved in the HIV/AIDS response and global health,” said Professor Barré-Sinoussi.

“Partnership and collaboration are critical to the efforts to find an HIV cure,” said Dr. Whitescarver. “We need not only the finest minds but the very best in scientific alliances.”

Today’s **Rome Statement for an HIV Cure** lists the following three key objectives:

- recognizing the importance of developing a safe, accessible and scalable HIV cure as a therapeutic and preventive strategy against HIV infection and to help control the AIDS epidemic.
- committing to stimulating international and multidisciplinary research collaborations in the field of HIV cure research.
- encouraging other stakeholders, international leaders and organizations to contribute to accelerating HIV cure research through their own initiatives and/or by endorsing this statement and supporting the alliance that the Advisory Board is building.

Board members, including co-chairs Professor Barré-Sinoussi and Dr. Whitescarver, have officially endorsed the statement.

Individuals and organisations wishing to sign the statement can do so by clicking [here](#).

Ends

Notes to Editors:

(1) For a complete list of Towards an HIV Cure Advisory Board and Working group members www.iasociety.org/Default.aspx?pageld=559

(2) **Functional cure** some HIV genetic material remains in the body, but the patient’s immune defence fully controls any viral rebound, allowing patients to be free of antiretroviral treatment; **Sterilizing cure** no HIV genetic material can be found in the body, HIV infection is eradicated. Given the nature of HIV - a retrovirus infecting the host immune system – and current knowledge and tools, a functional cure is more likely to be achieved.

About the signatories:

amfAR:

amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, is one of the world’s leading nonprofit organizations dedicated to the support of AIDS research, HIV prevention, treatment

education, and the advocacy of sound AIDS-related public policy. Since 1985, amfAR has invested nearly \$325 million in its programs and has awarded grants to more than 2,000 research teams worldwide.

ANRS:

The Anrs (National Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis) is the leading organization for research on the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis epidemics in France, and a leader in the fight against these diseases in limited resource settings. In 2009, the Anrs had a budget of 44 million euros (62 million US dollars) from the French government, over 95% of which was allotted to research projects.

EATG:

EATG is a community organisation that promotes the interests of people living with HIV/AIDS. EATG's mission is to achieve the fastest possible access to state of the art medical products, devices and diagnostic tests that prevent or treat HIV infection, and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS in Europe.

IAS:

The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with 16,000 members from 196 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 host of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention to be held in Rome July 17-20, 2011. The IAS is also the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference, which will be held in Washington D.C., USA, from 22 to 27 July 2012.

NIH:

The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) — *The Nation's Medical Research Agency* — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, behavioral and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

Sidaction:

Sidaction, a France-based NGO, is a diverse coalition of individuals and organizations from France and from developing countries. Dedicated to fundraising, advocacy, and technical assistance to fight HIV/AIDS in France and in 29 low and middle income countries, Sidaction raises private funds to promote cutting-edge scientific research and to improve access to prevention, care, treatment, and support programs.

TAG:

The Treatment Action Group is an independent AIDS research and policy think tank fighting for better treatment, a vaccine, and a cure for AIDS. TAG works to ensure that all people with hiv receive lifesaving treatment, care, and information.

Further information:

In Rome:

Onsite Media Centre Landline No. +39 0680241 756		
Name	Email	Mobile
International media: Lindsey Rodger Michael Kessler	lindsey.rodger@iasociety.org mkessler@ya.com	+39 348 686 8417
Italian media: Andrea Tomasini	tomasini39@hotmail.com	+39 329 263 4619