Oakland, California hosts preparation meetings in the countdown to AIDS 2012

19 May 2011(Oakland, CA) — At the invitation of U.S. Representative Barbara Lee, the organizing committees for AIDS 2012 held a series of planning meetings, met with leaders of local HIV service providers and visited an HIV clinic in Oakland, California, as they began the process of building the programme for the world’s premier biennial gathering on HIV/AIDS. AIDS 2012, expected to convene more than 20,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries, will be held in Washington, DC from 22 to 27 July 2012.

“We are all enthused by the cascade of recent scientific and programmatic advances in HIV and we are laying the groundwork to ensure that we are able to take full advantage of them as we build the conference programme,” said Dr. Elly Katabira, AIDS 2012 International Chair and President of the International AIDS Society.

The three conference programme planning committees, focused on community, leadership and accountability, and science, each used the planning meetings to develop their missions, visions and outreach strategies. The Conference Coordinating Committee (CCC), the lead organizing body, discussed the wide range of issues related to the lead up and implementation of AIDS 2012, including initial discussions on the conference theme, communications strategies, and the use of conference hubs outside of Washington, DC to engage those who are not attending. As a part of their deliberations, the CCC gave initial approval for an affiliated U.S. awareness campaign aimed at engaging local communities across the U.S. and highlighting the U.S National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

The decision to convene the planning meetings in Oakland reflected a desire of the planning committees to learn more about the diversity of the HIV epidemic in communities across the U.S., the opportunity presented by Representative Lee’s invitation and the enthusiasm of local HIV organizations to share their challenges and success with the conference organizers. Representative Lee has attended and been an active participant in the past six International AIDS Conferences.

“I am thrilled that Oakland was able to host this important meeting of HIV/AIDS leaders to begin the planning of the International AIDS Conference that comes to Washington, DC in July 2012,” said Representative Lee. “I am proud to have helped lead the effort in Congress to repeal the HIV travel and immigration ban — not just because we got rid of an unjust policy, but also because we finally got rid of a major source of fear, stigma and discrimination for people living with HIV/AIDS. As we celebrate the encouraging breakthroughs in HIV/AIDS scientific research, it is critical that we continue to be relentless in our fight to combat this HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

In response Dr. Diane Havlir, U.S. Co-Chair for AIDS 2012 noted that “Representative Lee is a leader on HIV issues at the local, national and international levels and we are grateful for her continued leadership and for the opportunity to come to Oakland and gather local perspectives and insights into some key issues of the U.S. HIV epidemic that will be highlighted at AIDS 2012.”

Dr. Havlir finished by summing up the conference’s unique value, “The conference is an opportunity to take stock of the epidemic, showcase new science in the pipeline, and bring together policymakers and community with scientists to find solutions to the challenges before us.”

Additional information about the conference, including the complete list of the CCC and JPC members, is available at [www.aids2012.org](http://www.aids2012.org).
Conference organization:

AIDS 2012 is convened by the International AIDS Society and the conference’s permanent partners are 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 United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The U.S.-based Black AIDS Institute; the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH); the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA); the National Institutes of Health (NIH); the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) at the White House; and the U.S. Positive Women’s Network (USPWN) are serving as local partners.

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 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 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 Rome, Italy in July 2011.

www.iasociety.org | www.ias2011.org

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