



OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE: DAY 1

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
19:00 EST, SUNDAY 22 JULY 2012**

International AIDS Conference Opens in the U.S. for the First Time in 22 Years at Defining Moment in the History of the AIDS Epidemic

Assembled Scientists, Policymakers and Advocates Cautiously Optimistic that with Increased Resources and Leadership Beginning of the End of the Epidemic is at Hand

Sunday, 22 July 2012 (Washington, D.C., USA) - Under the theme *Turning the Tide Together*, more than 23,000 delegates from over 195 countries gathered in Washington, D.C. for the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) to begin the march toward the end of the AIDS epidemic. Noting that recent scientific advances have changed the landscape of the epidemic, delegates will dedicate the week to presenting the latest scientific research and building momentum toward ensuring that financing and global leadership across all sectors keep pace with scientific progress against HIV. The conference runs through Friday, 27 July at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

“Our return to the United States after a 22-year absence comes at a time of extraordinary hope, a time when we believe that the end of the AIDS epidemic is possible, said Elly Katabira International Chair of AIDS 2012 and President of the International AIDS Society (IAS). “AIDS 2012 is an important opportunity to thank the American people and highlight the millions of lives saved as a result of generous U.S. contributions to the global fight against AIDS and its leadership in HIV research.”

“There is no doubt, that our progress over the past 30 years has been impressive, but maintaining the status quo is simply not enough,” said Dr. Diane Havlir, U.S. Co-Chair of AIDS 2012 and Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. “My message to policy makers around the entire world watching us here in D.C. is this – invest in science, invest in the epidemic – you will save lives.”

Drs. Katabira and Havlir called on delegates and allies around the world to sign The Washington, D.C. Declaration, the official declaration of AIDS 2012. The declaration calls for renewed urgency and seeks to build broad support for beginning to end the AIDS epidemic through a nine-point action plan. (www.dcdeclaration or www.2endaids.org).

The Opening Session included remarks from a range of U.S. and global leaders, including U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, South African Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (via video), U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, Washington, D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray, Ambassador Mark Dybul and Annah Sango of Zimbabwe.

"In the 22 years since this conference was held on American soil, we have made long-awaited breakthroughs in science and treatment," said Secretary Sebelius. "Today, someone diagnosed with HIV and treated before the disease is far advanced can have a nearly normal life expectancy. Now is not the time for easing up, slowing down, or shifting our focus. If we are going to reach our ultimate goal of an AIDS-free generation, we must all challenge ourselves to do more – to reach even more people, to make programs even more effective and accountable, to push the boundaries of science even further."

"Sustained progress in the AIDS response is accelerating our journey to Zero," said Michel Sidibé. "It is now time for a new AIDS agenda and new partnerships based on shared responsibility, mutual accountability and global solidarity."

"The AIDS fight has shown the world how to turn the tide of a massive assault on human life and dignity. We have a responsibility to ensure that lessons from AIDS inform and improve our efforts to tackle other goals, above all poverty eradication," said World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim.

Congresswoman Lee noted that "the return of the International AIDS Conference to the United States at this pivotal time is a long overdue opportunity for our domestic epidemic to become part of a global effort working to achieve a world without AIDS. From California to Cameroon, we are literally at a tipping point in the fight against AIDS- and at no time in history has our global leadership been more important to address the ongoing challenges in our own country and around the world."

"Young people need to move from being passengers to drivers, Sexual reproductive health rights are fundamental to everyone the sooner we appreciate that the closer we get to making a difference in the lives of women and young people," said Annah Sango.

The International AIDS Conference was last held in the U.S. in 1990 in San Francisco. U.S. restrictions on the entry of people living with HIV prohibited the conference's return in the ensuing 20 years. Following years of advocacy and under a process initiated by President George W. Bush and finished by President Barack Obama, the U.S. restrictions were lifted in 2010, paving the way for the conference's return.

Conference Programme

AIDS 2012 will include the presentation of more than 3,600 scientific abstracts across the range of HIV-related disciplines along with non-abstract-driven sessions addressing key issues and the vibrant Global Village and Youth Programme. All accepted abstracts are available through the conference website.

Online Viewing

A substantial portion of the conference will be available through webcasts produced by the Kaiser Family Foundation (www.kff.org/aids2012), as well as videos and slide presentations available through the conference's Programme-at-Glance (<http://pag.aids2012.org>).

Conference Organization

AIDS 2012 is convened by the International AIDS Society and the conference's international 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 United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC); and Sidaction.

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 White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP); and the U.S. Positive Women's Network (USPWN) serve as local partners.

AIDS 2012: Join the conversation

Get the latest conference updates and share your thoughts and ideas through the Conference Facebook and Twitter. We are tweeting – @aids2012 – and hope many of you will tweet along with us, using #AIDS2012 to keep the conversation going. Become a fan of AIDS 2012 on Facebook and stay in touch with the latest conference updates and developments. Please visit www.facebook.com/aids2012 to become a fan. If your group or organization is participating in AIDS 2012, we welcome posts of photos and videos of your work on this page. Tell us why you are coming to Washington and what you hope to gain from AIDS 2012.

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AIDS 2012 Opening Session

The Opening Session is scheduled from 19:00-21:00 on Sunday, 22 July 2012. The Cultural programme is from 18:00-19:00.

- 17:30 **Doors open**
- 18:00 **Films/videos**
- 18:13 **IAS/amfAR Elizabeth Taylor award, in recognition of efforts to advocate for human rights in the field of HIV**, Sharon Stone, United States
- 18:18 **Films/videos**
- 18:25 **Opening blessing**, Indigenous community group
- 18:30 **Cultural entertainment**, Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C.
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- 19:00 **Opening convocation**, Reverend Charles Straight, Pastor of the Faith United Methodist Church, United States
- 19:03 **AIDS 2012 co-chairs' welcome**, Elly Katabira, International Chair, and Diane Havlir, U.S. Co-Chair
- 19:13 **Welcome to DC**, Mayor Vincent C. Gray, United States
- 19:19 **Time for accountability**, Annah Sango, Zimbabwe
- 19:29 **Ending AIDS and poverty**, Jim Kim, The World Bank
- 19:39 **Our journey to zero: a new era to leverage opportunities and share responsibility**, Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS
- 19:49 **Address by the Secretary General of the United Nations**, SG Ban Ki-moon (video message)
- 20:00 **The beginning of the end of AIDS**, Barbara Lee, Congresswoman, United States
- 20:05 **Remarks**, Mark Dybul, United States
- 20:15 **Remarks**, Kgalema Motlanthe, Deputy President, South Africa
- 20:25 **Remarks**, Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, United States

- 21:00 **End of Opening Session**