



International AIDS Society and AIDS 2012 partners join District of Columbia Mayor Vincent Gray to announce plans for collaboration as city prepares to host XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012)

Local conference office begins preparations for biennial conference expected to bring more than 20,000 delegates from 200 nations to city seriously impacted by HIV

25 February 2011 (Washington, DC) — District of Columbia officials and the International AIDS Society (IAS) on behalf of all the partners* of AIDS 2012 announced significant progress and collaboration today in the planning of the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012), to be held in Washington, DC from 22 to 27 July 2012 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

AIDS 2012 is expected to convene more than 20,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries, including more than 2,000 journalists. As the largest gathering of professionals working in the field of HIV, including people living with HIV and other leaders in the HIV response, the biennial International AIDS Conference plays a fundamental role in shaping the global response to HIV and in keeping HIV and AIDS on the international political agenda.

Next year's conference will be the first one held in the United States since 1990. It will take place in a city where officials are taking major steps to combat the District of Columbia's HIV/AIDS problem – one of the worst in the United States.

“The return of the International AIDS Conference to the United States and to Washington, D.C., will have an important impact on our collective efforts to respond to the global epidemic,” said Elly Katabira, IAS President and International Chair of AIDS 2012. “The District of Columbia is a city that knows too well the devastating impact that HIV can have on the fabric of a community. While AIDS 2012 will be international in scope, it will also be an opportunity to focus attention on the epidemic in D.C. and across the U.S. and to re-energize the response to the national HIV challenges as well as the specific epidemic in the nation's capital city.”

Three percent of DC residents are known to be living with HIV and AIDS. African Americans are disproportionately affected, making up 53% of the general DC population but accounting for 76% of those living with HIV and AIDS in the city. An estimated 0.35 per cent of the U.S. population as a whole is living with HIV -- highlighting the gravity of the situation in D.C., which has a prevalence rate par with certain countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest burden of HIV in the world.

“Our city is proud to host AIDS 2012 and we are committed to using the conference as an opportunity to strengthen our local HIV response by engaging our residents, learning from our colleagues from around the world, and showcasing the progress we are making in our local efforts,” said Mayor Vincent C. Gray. “The government of the District of Columbia will be an active and committed partner to ensure that the conference advances HIV/AIDS efforts in the District and around the world.”

Mayor Gray also noted, “I see the suffering that HIV is visiting on our city and I have long acted on my commitment to enhancing access to HIV prevention and care in all of our neighborhoods and communities. Under the leadership of my health team, I am determined to reduce new HIV infections in the District of Columbia and ensure that those who are infected learn their status and connect to quality care.”



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On 23 February, Gray announced that he had created a Mayor's Commission on HIV/AIDS to address ways to reduce both the infection rate in the city and to increase accessibility to treatment for District residents already infected. The 27-member panel will be led by two veteran public-health officials. Gray's Department of Health also announced new efforts to increase accessibility to treatment for those already infected, work with formerly incarcerated persons returning to DC who may have been infected in prison, and creating a required continuing-education course for all healthcare professionals working with people living with AIDS and HIV.

Dr. Mohammad N. Akhter, Director of the DC Department of Health, and Dr. Gregory Pappas who directs the city's HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Disease and Tuberculosis Administration (HAHSTA) joined the mayor in welcoming AIDS 2012.

Dr. Diane Havlir, Local Co-Chair of AIDS 2012, highlighted the disparities in HIV care that exist in the U.S., and noted that the conference will draw attention to these disparities as well as offering solutions to improve them. She promised showcasing of new and exciting scientific advances in the field as well as discussions of how these advances can be put into practice.

The event was also used to announce the opening of the local office of AIDS 2012 and unveil the conference logo, which will become a visible symbol across the city as it gears up to welcome the conference participants next summer.

In closing the event, Mats Ahnlund, Deputy Executive Director of the IAS reiterated the importance of collaboration at all levels and how the conference acts as a catalyst for this. "The International AIDS Conference can only be a success with a strong local host community and it is already very clear to us that Washington, DC is the best choice for AIDS 2012," he commented. "The city is the home of central players in the global response to HIV/AIDS, including the National Institutes of Health and PEPFAR, and the local community and government officials have already moved into action as active partners and supporters of our efforts."

AIDS 2012 is convened by IAS and permanent 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 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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***AIDS 2012 Permanent Partners**

Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)
International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)
International Community of Women with HIV/AIDS (ICW)
United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

AIDS 2012 Local Partners

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District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH)
HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) at the White House
U.S. Positive Women's Network (USPWN)

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