Challenges and Solutions

Some of the significant challenges facing the global epidemic include implementing treatment as prevention in settings most affected by HIV/AIDS, research toward a cure, and using funding efficiently. Today’s plenary speakers will address different aspects of these challenges and present possible solutions. Howard K. Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will deliver an additional plenary address on the U.S. National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

HIV Cure
Javier Martinez-Picado (Spain), Senior Investigator, IrsiCaixa AIDS Research Institute and ICREA, will speak on Viral Eradication: The Cure Agenda. He will provide an overview of the reasons for making HIV cure a research priority, the existing limitations to an HIV cure, the potential strategies to achieve it, current pilot clinical trials aimed at a cure, and current and future challenges in the field. “We need to coordinate innovative basic, translational and clinical science to find a safe, affordable and scalable cure strategy for HIV.”

Prevention Strategies
In her remarks, Implementation Science: Making the New Prevention Revolution Real, Nelly Mugo (Kenya) of the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta National Hospital will note that the use of antiretroviral drugs for HIV prevention of mother-to-child transmission has led to the virtual elimination of perinatal HIV in Western countries and great strides in reducing incidence globally. Other prevention strategies, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), voluntary medical male circumcision, condoms and behavioral interventions, have made a dent in the epidemic over the years and together provide a real opportunity to create an AIDS-free generation. “Combining behavioral interventions, expanding access to treatment as prevention and initiating PrEP provides both community and individual benefits. It will take a concerted effort and commitment from a wide spectrum of players, but it is possible.”

Finding Efficiency
Bernhard Schwartländer, Director for Evidence, Strategy and Results at UNAIDS, will discuss using currently available and future resources for fighting HIV/AIDS more efficiently and effectively. In his presentation, What Will It Take to Turn the Tide?, Schwartländer will argue that there will be enough funding for a global AIDS response over the coming 10 to 15 years, but only if we work in smart ways to reduce prices and think far beyond the traditional concept of development assistance to secure additional funds. “In 10 years, it will no longer be possible to separate between a rich and a poor world. To find sufficient funding to win the fight, we need to do better with what we have and understand this complex new world order within a framework of shared responsibility.”

Building on Success: A National Strategy to Save Lives
In his plenary address, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Health Howard K. Koh (United States) will discuss development and implementation of the United States’ first-ever comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy. He will provide an overview of the strategy’s three goals and share brief examples of how the U.S. is working to achieve them. “As we build on the foundation we’ve established, we continue to benefit from the experience and expertise of our many domestic and global partners. My hope is that, together, we can seize this moment and channel this momentum toward the vision of an AIDS-free generation.”

Global Scientific Strategy Towards an HIV Cure Launched at Pre-Conference Symposium
On 20 and 21 July, in the lead-up to AIDS 2012, the International AIDS Society (IAS) convened a basic and clinical science symposium presenting the Global Scientific Strategy Towards an HIV Cure. Amid renewed optimism from the world’s leading HIV/AIDS scientists that the future prospects for finding an HIV cure are increasing, the IAS and its partners launched the strategy following publication in Nature Reviews Immunology. The Global Scientific Strategy, developed by an international scientific working group of 34 leading HIV scientists and clinicians, identifies seven important priority areas for basic, translational and clinical research and maps out a path for future research collaboration and funding opportunities.

The vision for the strategy is a safe, affordable and scalable cure to improve the health and quality-of-life for those with established infection, reduce the risk of transmission of virus to those not infected, and ultimately allow resources to be shifted to other needs. “The science has been telling us for some time now that achieving a cure for HIV infection could be a realistic possibility. The time is right to take the opportunity to try and develop an HIV cure — we might regret never having tried”, Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, the co-discoverer of HIV, Director of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, and the IAS President-Elect, said at the symposium.

After the strategy is disseminated to the scientific community, the IAS and the advisory board will monitor its roll-out by continuing to build international research alliances and contributing to the expansion of existing consortiums to accelerate scientific advancement in this field. Along with partner agencies and communities, they will design and implement a multi-year funding coordination plan and identify underfunded areas. Finally, they will develop an industry outreach plan, involving the creation of an industry collaboration group to focus on intellectual property issues and other research priority areas. The full strategy and material from the symposium are available at: www.iasociety.org.
Programme Highlights

ARV Therapy: Clinical Trials
Session Room 1, 11:00-12:30
Oral abstract presentations on combination therapies and new drugs.

The Impact of HIV on Transgender Communities
Session Room 6, 11:00-12:30
The session will examine issues relevant to HIV/AIDS for transgender people in different parts of the world, including epidemiology, human rights, migration, and legal barriers. The session was developed with a community advisory group of trans activists and all presenters are transgender.

Late Breaker Track E
Mini Room 9, 11:00-12:30
Oral abstract presentations for Track E: Implementation Science, Health Systems and Economics.

Regional Session: Latin America – Latinos y VIH – Retos y Oportunidades para Transformar la Respuesta al SIDA
Session Room 5, 11:00-12:30
Panelists will discuss ways to improve and strengthen HIV prevention, treatment and care, and how to ensure funding for more efficient programmes. In addition, they will present examples of regional mechanisms and agreements that will lead to progress. The session will be in Spanish with simultaneous interpretation to English.

China, India, South Africa, Brazil: How Will They Use Their Leadership to Advance the AIDS Response?
Session Room 1, 13:00-14:00
A roundtable discussion with high-level speakers from the four emerging powers, as well as comments from development economist Jeffrey Sachs, will examine the countries’ major accomplishments in HIV/AIDS and look prospectively at their future leadership paths.

ARV Controversies and Challenges: When to Start? What to Start?
Session Room 3, 13:00-14:00
The session will address when to start ARV therapy and what drugs to use. The speakers will respond to questions from both resource-rich setting (RRS) and resource-limited setting (RLS) perspectives.

Keeping the Momentum: Opportunities for Diplomacy
Session Room 4, 13:00-14:00
Current AIDS and health ambassadors from Australia, France, Kenya, Sweden and the U.S. will discuss recent progress in curbing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and how to maintain political and financial support and investments.

The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Turning the Tide on the HIV Pandemic
Session Room 5, 13:00-14:00
The session will focus on the critical and growing role of the faith community in increasing political will in the fight against AIDS at the local, national and international levels.

The Global Commission on HIV and the Law: A Movement for HIV Law Reform
Session Room 2, 14:30-16:00
This session will highlight the research and policy dialogue undertaken by the Commission on issues of criminalization, discrimination and violence as experienced by women, and HIV-related treatment access. The session also will address how policy and law can contribute to the scale-up of effective HIV responses.

HIV at 50+
Session Room 7, 14:30-16:00
This session will discuss epidemiological data on HIV/AIDS among adults 50+ and examine the medical and psychosocial needs and challenges of managing, as well as preventing, HIV in this specific population.

The Lancet 2012 Special Theme Series: Men Who Have Sex with Men and HIV
Session Room 1, 16:30-18:00
Speakers will present reviews from The Lancet’s special-themed issue on the HIV epidemic among men who have sex with men, among the most heavily burdened groups. The series reviews to be presented in this session include: the global epidemiology of HIV among MSM, HIV prevention, caring for the whole man, health disparities for African diaspora MSM, the politics of homophobia, community responses and leadership, and a call to action for MSM and HIV.

Regional Session: Europe
Session Room 5, 16:30-18:00
The session will highlight some European multi-stakeholders’ initiatives and the role of civil society by showing how they tackle challenges in HIV treatment, prevention and care.

Announcement

Recycling
AIDS 2012 is socially responsible. Recycling bins are available throughout the venue. Please deposit any recyclables in the appropriate containers. In addition, the conference is offsetting carbon emissions and reducing the number of printed publications.

Online Resources

E-Posters
Authors of abstracts selected for Oral Poster Discussion Sessions and Poster Exhibition were invited to upload an electronic poster (e-poster). The e-posters are published on the Abstract CD-ROM and the Abstract section of the Programme-at-a-Glance on the conference website.

Rapporteur Reports
An international team of rapporteurs is preparing summaries of all sessions. Community leaders are also will sharing their perspectives. Session reports and daily summaries in each track are available in the online Programme-at-a-Glance. Rapporteur teams are also covering activities in the Global Village and Youth Pavilion. Those summaries will be available online and at the Rapporteur Session on Friday, 27 July.

Webcast Reminder
If you missed sessions or want to re-watch ones that you attended, more than 135 sessions will be available for online viewing, accessible through the Programme-at-a-Glance.

Have you Downloaded the Mobile App?

The AIDS 2012 mobile app is proving to be a popular new tool with over 12,000 downloads so far. The app is available for iPhones, iPads and Androids. Search for “AIDS 2012”

Award Presentation: Creative and Novel Ideas in HIV Research

The recipients of the second round of the research grant programme Creative and Novel Ideas in HIV Research (CNHHR) will receive their awards in Session Room 1 at 8:35 at the start of the morning plenary. The CNHHR programme, which is jointly sponsored by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), the NIH-supported Centers for AIDS Research (CFARs) and the International AIDS Society (IAS), aims to promote innovative research and novel ideas from early stage investigators whose primary focus has previously been in fields of scientific inquiry other than HIV. The 12 researchers selected for the CNHHR grants, which total US$5 million over two years, come from a range of scientific disciplines and locations, including Argentina, India, and the United States. Details on the awardees are available at www.iisociety.org.