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AIDS 2012 Closing Session Speech

Friday, 27 July 2012

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Distinguished delegates and guests, let me take this opportunity to thank you all for making the International AIDS Conference’s return to the United States a grand success. With nearly 24,000 registered delegates, I am proud to say that this has been one of the most highly-attended International AIDS Conferences ever. As I often am, however, I was reminded again this week that while the International AIDS Conference is the largest conference dedicated to a single health issue, it is not its size that makes it unique. What truly sets it apart is the degree to which scientists, leadership and community come together participate and chart a path forward in the epidemic. And this week was no different.

This has truly been a remarkable week. Our robust scientific programme gave us exciting news in the path towards an HIV cure, progress in addressing HIV and TB, and data on new anti-HIV therapies, just to name some of the highlights. There was robust discussion on how to go about financing the implementation of HIV treatment and prevention, and we learned more about how we can address HIV among key affected populations, including women, youth, men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers, and people who use drugs.

In addition, we heard from leaders from the worlds of science, diplomacy, politics, philanthropy and entertainment. And the success of the Global Village and the Youth
Programme has galvanized the efforts of the activists and young scientists who will be the future of our fight to end AIDS.

As International Chair of the nineteenth International AIDS Conference and outgoing President of the International AIDS Society, I would like to commend everyone for their tireless efforts to make AIDS 2012 a truly great conference, and I urge delegates to maintain the momentum. This Conference has shown us that turning the tide together on HIV/AIDS is possible, but we must acknowledge that there are still huge barriers standing in our way.

We must end stigma and we must end discrimination if we are to end the epidemic.

As I look back on my tenure as President of the International AIDS Society, I am proud of all that we’ve accomplished.

And I know that the person I’m about to invite to the podium will accomplish a great deal over the next two years. Currently serving as Director of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Institute Pasteur, she won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2008 for co-discovering the HIV virus and contributing greatly to the field. She is now leading the International AIDS Society’s strategy for an HIV cure. It is my great pleasure to invite to the podium the next President of the International AIDS Society and the International Chair of AIDS 2014, Dr. Francoise Barré-Sinoussi.

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD – SCRIPTED TEXT