



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **World-leading scientist experiences Oil Search's HIV programs in PNG first-hand**

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014 (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea)** – Papua New Guinea (PNG) is one of the countries most affected by HIV in the Asia-Pacific Region. Current estimates suggest that HIV prevalence in PNG is 0.5% of people aged 15-49 years of age, and that there are 25,000 people living with HIV.

Access to HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care services is particularly challenging in remote areas of the country, where the environment and location can make access to health facilities very difficult. Innovative processes and partnerships for providing HIV and other health services in PNG, such as those offered by Oil Search, have been important elements in the country's HIV response. Case studies from PNG and other countries in the Asia-Pacific Region will be a major focus of attention at the 20<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) taking place in Melbourne, Australia, from 20<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July.

This week, Professor Sharon Lewin, local co-chair of AIDS 2014, will join a field trip to Tari Hospital hosted by Oil Search, to experience first-hand how private sector companies are leveraging their business systems and local knowledge to implement and scale-up HIV prevention, testing, counselling and treatment services in remote and rural regions of PNG. Professor Lewin is one of the world's leading scientists researching a potential cure for HIV.

"I am very excited that private companies such as Oil Search are involved in AIDS 2014 in such a significant way," said Lewin. "This level of support reflects the depth of commitment Oil Search has shown in Papua New Guinea and new models of HIV-related programs based on very successful public-private partnerships. I am eager to see first-hand the wonderful work Oil Search, the National Department of Health and the Global Fund are doing with local communities to halt the progress of HIV."

The delegation, made up of representatives from Oil Search, Oil Search Health Foundation, UNAIDS, the Global Fund, National Department of Health and other organisations will explore how public-private partnerships are being developed to respond to HIV. The Oil Search Health Foundation, which works in close partnership with the PNG Government, is a sub-recipient of the Global Fund Round 10 HIV grant in the Hela and Morobe provinces.

Delegates will visit Tari Hospital in Hela province to witness how the Oil Search Health Foundation HIV team is supporting the HIV clinic at the hospital. They will also visit a number of local health facilities nearby to talk to staff and frontline health workers about the challenges they face and impact they are having on the HIV response in Hela.

Peter Botten, Managing Director for Oil Search, will be accompanying the high-level delegation to demonstrate how Oil Search's infrastructure, business skills and financial resources are helping to step up the pace in Papua New Guinea's HIV response.

"Hela Province is the heartland of our operating area, but also one of the places that has a significant HIV burden. Visiting Tari Hospital is a powerful and confronting experience. Only by being there can you really appreciate the challenging environment in which the hospital and health facilities are struggling to provide quality HIV services," said Botten.

"For us, it is an environment we deal with every day, so we are well accustomed to handling the challenges of remote and rural settings," he said.

"I believe strongly that there is an obligation on the private sector to leverage its skills and expertise to support overburdened and fragile health systems and urge others operating in similar environments, both in PNG and elsewhere in the region, to work with local partners to develop meaningful health interventions where they are so desperately needed."

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#### **About AIDS 2014**

The 20<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) will be held in Melbourne, Australia, from July 20-25. It will bring together representatives from science, civil society, community, politics and the private sector to discuss the most pressing issues and science linked to HIV. It is the first time the conference will be hosted in Australia and only the second time back in the Asia-Pacific Region (since the conference was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2004).

Registration for the conference is still available – full details available online ([www.aids2014.org](http://www.aids2014.org)).

AIDS 2014 will be a unique opportunity to share the latest scientific advances in the field and develop strategies for advancing all facets of our collective efforts to treat and prevent HIV.

#### **AIDS 2014 online**

An interactive daily programme, a YouTube page, mobile app, and webinars facilitate the exchange of the latest information from the grassroots-level to the elite policy forums at international levels whether you are attending the conference in person or following remotely join the conversation on social media to stay in touch with the latest updates and developments.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/InternationalAIDSConference](http://www.facebook.com/InternationalAIDSConference)

Twitter: @AIDS\_conference #AIDS2014

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/iasaidsconference](http://www.youtube.com/user/iasaidsconference)

#### **About Oil Search**

Oil Search Limited is an oil and gas exploration and development company that has been operating in Papua New Guinea since 1929. Most of the Company's assets are located in PNG, where it holds an extensive spread of oil and gas production and exploration licences. Oil Search operates all of PNG's currently producing oil fields, with net production of 6.74

million barrels of oil equivalent (mmboe) in 2013. The Company has operations in Papua New Guinea, Australia and the Middle East.

Website: <http://www.oilsearch.com>

### **About the Oil Search Health Foundation**

The Oil Search Health Foundation was established in 2011 to identify high profile health issues in Papua New Guinea and seek opportunities and partnerships to strengthen the country's health systems and processes. We aim for high-impact interventions that result in improved delivery of services and better health outcomes for the people of Papua New Guinea.

In 2012 the Oil Search Health Foundation was appointed as Papua New Guinea's Principal Recipient for the Global Fund Round 10 HIV grant. Administration of the considerable grant of US\$46 million over five years involves managing nine sub-recipients and close collaboration with Papua New Guinea's National Department of Health.

The Oil Search Health Foundation is now part of a small group of private sector companies involved directly in managing Global Fund grants. The engagement of the private sector in managing the delivery of multilateral development aid is seen internationally as a very promising pathway to step up the pace in the global response to HIV.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OilSearchHealthFoundation>

Twitter: @OilSearchHealth

Website: [www.oilsearchhealthfoundation.org](http://www.oilsearchhealthfoundation.org)

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