

**OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE – DAY 5
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FAST-TRACKING THE GLOBAL HIV RESPONSE - DAY 5 AT AIDS 2014

SIR BOB GELDOF SAYS THE ‘LAST MILE’ OF THE HIV EPIDEMIC MUST BE FUNDED

Thursday July 23, 2014 – Sir Bob Geldof has told delegates at AIDS 2014, the 20th International AIDS Conference, that the “preposterous reluctance” of governments to fund HIV programs in developing countries is “disgraceful”, especially as the journey to the end of the HIV epidemic is “in the last mile”.

The renowned anti-poverty campaigner made the comments at the conference in Melbourne today as he reflected on the impact of HIV on developing nations.

Geldof said that the HIV epidemic in low income countries is “inextricably linked” to poverty, and he strongly criticized wealthy nations for reneging on foreign aid commitments.

The theme of the conference today (Thursday 24 July) was ‘making the long term short term’, and today’s activities began with plenary presentations about fast-tracking the global HIV response. Issues discussed included accelerating the development of an HIV vaccine (Antonio Lanzavecchia of Switzerland), advancing the development of HIV prevention technologies (Kenneth Mayer of the US), and improving research about and engagement with transgender people and men who have sex with men (Beatriz Grinsztejn of Brasil, and Laurindo Garcia of the Philippines).

The escalating HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was explored in a special session featuring representatives from Russia, Lithuania and Moldova. The panel considered the regions intersecting epidemics of HIV, injecting drug use, hepatitis C and tuberculosis, as well as solutions to issues such as poor access to treatment and the marginalisation and criminalisation of men who have sex with men and people who inject drugs.

Also this morning was a symposium on the worrying trends of HIV transmission and co-infection in prisons, where HIV prevalence is up to 50 times higher than the general population. Other sessions included a discussion of how cultural and political environments are impacting on the health outcomes of indigenous populations throughout the world, and strategies for making workplaces more inclusive and supportive of people with HIV.

This afternoon featured a special session on how affected communities can work with pharmaceutical companies to ensure that new antiretroviral treatments are made more affordable and more available. Other sessions this afternoon explored a range of subjects such as: the challenges of being transgender in Asia and the Pacific; cultural sensitivity training for sexual health workers in Islamic countries; and how sacred texts can be used to talk effectively about sexuality and diversity.

The Global Village, the conference’s international showcase of community related HIV programmes and activities, welcomed Geldof to the village, and showed him around the wide range of events including theatrical and dance performances, fashion shows, film screenings and music recitals, as well as discussions on a variety of issues including, discrimination experienced by people with HIV and AIDS in Pakistan; the networking strategies of transgender sex workers in the Caribbean; and how young female HIV activists are making a difference in places such as China, Kenya and Uganda.

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Further information:

AIDS 2014 Conference Organization

AIDS 2014 is convened by the 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 Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Non-permanent partners are the Positive Women’s Network and Sidaction.

The Australian based partners are: the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM); and the National Association of people with HIV Australia (NAPWHA).

The Asia Pacific Partners are: The Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW); the AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific (ASAP); and the National AIDS Research of India (NARI).



AIDS 2014 on Social Media

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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 177 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. The IAS 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 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 Vancouver, B.C., Canada, 19-22 July 2015.

www.iasociety.org | www.aids2014.org | www.ias2015.org

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Photo gallery for day 4 can be found at: <http://aids2014.smugmug.com/Thursday-24-July-2014>

Photo on following page: Sir Bob Geldof with Local Co-chair of AIDS 2014, Sharon Lewin – promoting the AIDS 2014 Melbourne Declaration – Nobody Left Behind.



Photo credit: Steve Forrest, IAS