



*Time to Deliver • Passons aux actes*

# Conference Overview

## **Conference Theme: *Time to Deliver***

The conference theme, *Time to Deliver*, underscores the continued urgency in bringing effective HIV prevention and treatment strategies to communities the world over. Twenty-five years after the first reports of what was later to be known as AIDS, the magnitude of this epidemic demands increased accountability among all stakeholders to fulfill their commitments, be they financial, programmatic or political. While additional resources and continued scientific research are critical to an effective global response, the theme recognises that the scientific knowledge and tools to prevent new infections and prolong life among those living with HIV/AIDS already exist, even in the poorest settings. The challenge at hand is to garner the resources and the collective will to translate that knowledge and experience into broadly available HIV treatment and prevention programs.

## **Organizers**

The International AIDS Conference is convened every other year by the **International AIDS Society (IAS)**, the world's leading independent association of HIV/AIDS professionals with more than 10,000 members from 153 countries. The **Toronto Local Host** is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization, and is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of leaders engaged in the Canadian response to HIV/AIDS. The five co-organizers are:

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

AIDS 2006 is co-chaired by IAS President Dr. Helene Gayle, President and CEO of CARE USA, and Toronto Local Host Chair Dr. Mark Wainberg, Director of McGill University's AIDS Centre and Professor of Medicine and Microbiology.

## **Record Numbers of Participants Expected**

A record number of participants (an estimated 24,000), including more than 2,500 media from over 100 countries, are expected at AIDS 2006.

## **Reduced Registration Fees and Expanded Scholarships**

In order to expand access to the conference, organizers introduced a new, two-tiered fee structure and reduced fees for delegates from non-OECD countries by more than US\$ 250 and for those from OECD countries by US\$ 50. Organizers also expanded funding for international scholarships by more than 20% over funding levels in Bangkok (2004) and a second, locally-funded scholarship programme for Canadian Residents was also implemented. Approximately 2,000 delegates received full or partial scholarships to attend.

## **Host City**

Toronto, Canada is the third Canadian city to host the International AIDS Conference. It was last held in Canada in Vancouver in 1996, where HAART was first announced. Montreal hosted the Conference in 1989.

### **AIDS 2006 to Present Latest Research Findings**

Reports based on abstracts selected from a record number of submissions (nearly 13,000) will shape a particularly strong scientific programme, tracing new trends in basic and clinical research, epidemiology, social science and policy.

Researchers will report fresh findings on the origins of HIV-1, propose how select groups manage to resist infection despite ongoing exposure to the virus, and explain how immunologic variables in infected people may shape the course of resistance to antiretrovirals. Leading medical experts will present new data on the complex intersections between TB and HIV, tackle the critical question of how pregnant women exposed to single-dose nevirapine respond to later antiretroviral therapy, and dissect results of the landmark structured treatment interruption trial, SMART. On the behavioral front investigators will offer some of the first hard evidence on how wider access to HIV testing and antiretrovirals affects sexual behavior, transmission of HIV, and AIDS stigma.

### **Other Sessions Explore Community, Leadership and Issues of Accountability**

As a follow up to the United Nations' recent Special Session on AIDS, AIDS 2006 will provide an opportunity for delegates to explore how best to monitor progress toward universal access to anti-HIV medications and ensure accountability moving forward. The programme will emphasize evidence-based approaches shown to prevent HIV and proven strategies that offer practical solutions to the enormous challenges of scaling up access to treatment and care.

Empowering women and girls has recently emerged as a major priority for an effective response to the epidemic, and the conference programme will feature a number of sessions addressing this theme. Other session topics include the relationship between HIV, poverty and development, and the importance of sexual and reproductive health rights for women, including commercial sex workers.

The programme will explore issues affecting men who have sex with men, and other vulnerable populations, such as Aboriginal people and injecting drug users. There will also be a focus on the greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS. The programme will highlight the importance of new leadership in regions with emerging epidemics and from all sectors, such as the faith and business communities and the media. Two special sessions will offer a retrospective of the first 25 years of AIDS and AIDS activism, while also exploring the major priorities towards ending the epidemic.

### **New Focus Areas**

Newly designated Key Challenge sessions will marshal the collective experience, knowledge and insights of conference delegates toward developing responses to the following shared challenges:

- Accelerate research to end the epidemic;
- Expand and sustain human resources to scale-up prevention and treatment;
- Intensify involvement of affected individuals and communities;
- Build new leadership to advance the response; and
- Scaling Up: Lessons from the field.

An expanded youth programme will offer sessions organized by and for young people that will explore issues of particular importance to this heavily affected population. A new youth website (<http://youth.aids2006.org>) will serve as a portal for youth-related programming during the conference and will feature interactive reports written by youth delegates.

### **Abstract Database**

A searchable database of abstracts to be presented at the conference will be available on [www.aids2006.org](http://www.aids2006.org) as of Saturday, 12 August 2006. All abstracts are embargoed for release until 08h00 EDT (local time/Toronto) on 12 August 2006.

### **Other Highlights**

- The Opening Session (held in Rogers Centre, adjacent to the MTCC) will feature addresses by Frika Chia Iskandar, a young Indonesian woman living with HIV/AIDS, and UNAIDS Executive Director Dr. Peter Piot, and will conclude with a keynote address by Bill and Melinda Gates. The opening will be followed by a concert.
- Other major speakers include former Presidents Mary Robinson and William J. Clinton, HRH Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway, NIAID Director Anthony Fauci and Richard Gere.
- The Cultural Activities Programme, "Viral Culture," will showcase the relationship between AIDS, art and culture through various events taking place on-site and throughout Toronto.
- For the second time, a Global Village, open to delegates and the general public, will promote learning and interaction between the diverse communities affected by and responding to HIV/AIDS.
- Skills Building sessions will cover a diverse range of content with the primary goal of facilitating the professional growth of conference delegates.
- A number of awards for scientific research and community leadership, including the IAS Young Investigator Award, the ANRS/IAS prize, the IAS/ICW Young Investigator Prize for Research on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS and the Red Ribbon Award celebrating community leadership and action on AIDS, will be presented at the conference.
- Expanded online programming provided through [www.aids2006.org](http://www.aids2006.org) and our online partners, [kaisernetwork.org](http://kaisernetwork.org) and Clinical Care Options, Inc., will offer free webcasts and other coverage of key proceedings.
- The conference will conclude on Friday, 18 August, with reports summarizing the major findings from the conference and a keynote address by U.N. Special Envoy Stephen Lewis.

The full conference schedule, including satellite sessions and affiliated events, is available at [www.aids2006.org](http://www.aids2006.org).