



WORLD LEADERS AND HIV EXPERTS TO GATHER IN MEXICO CITY

[El texto en español va a continuación del texto en inglés]

Confirmed participants include Ban Ki-moon, Festus Gontebanye Mogae, Bill Clinton, Margaret Chan, Keren Gonzalez, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, Anthony Fauci, Marcelo Ebrard, Denzil Douglas, Michel Kazatchkine, Peter Piot, José Angel Cordova Villalobos, Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega

21 JULY 2008 (Geneva, Switzerland) – The eyes of the world will soon turn to Mexico City where the XVII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2008) will take place in early August. The conference will draw around 25,000 participants from across the globe, including many world-renowned leaders and experts in their field.

AIDS 2008 will be officially opened on the evening of 3 August by Mexican President, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa. Other opening session speakers include José Angel Cordova Villalobos, Mexican Secretary of Health; Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization; Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Momy Pen, Asian activist and advocate for the rights of HIV-positive women around the world; Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St Kitts & Nevis; former President of Botswana, Festus Gontebanye Mogae; and María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, First Vice-President of Spain.

And joining this illustrious group of world leaders will be 12-year old Keren Gonzalez. Ms Gonzalez hails from Honduras, and has been actively involved in a number of HIV-related programmes aimed at young people since the age of 9, including acting as editor for the magazine, *Infantil LLAVECITAS*, aimed at children aged 8 to 12 years affected directly and indirectly by HIV/AIDS.

The following day (4 August), former U.S. President Bill Clinton, founder of the William J. Clinton Foundation, will keynote a session titled *HIV/AIDS and Health System Reform: Achieving Universal Coverage*, featuring the President of the Carso Health Institute and Senior Fellow of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Julio Frenk.

On Wednesday, 6 August, Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases will join Peter Piot (UNAIDS), Mark Harrington (Treatment Action Group, USA), Vuyiseka Dubula (Treatment Action Campaign, South Africa) and Frika Chia Iskandar (Asia Pacific Network of People Living with AIDS, Indonesia) to look towards the HIV epidemic in 2031 and new directions in AIDS research.

AIDS 2008 will close on Friday, 8 August with presentations by Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Marcelo Ebrard, the Mayor of Mexico City.

AIDS 2008 will be held at Centro Banamex in Mexico City from 3 to 8 August 2008. The conference theme of *Universal Action Now* emphasizes the need for continued urgency in the worldwide response to HIV/AIDS, and for action on the part of all stakeholders.

AIDS 2008 is convened by the International AIDS Society (IAS), the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals. Local partners include the Federal Government of Mexico, the Government of Mexico City and local scientific and community leadership. International institutional partners for AIDS 2008 include: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and its co-sponsors, the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Food Programme (WFP); International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO); Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+)/International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW); World YWCA; and the Asian Harm Reduction Network (AHRN).

For the latest information about the conference programme, as well as information on media accreditation and online registration, visit www.aids2008.org.

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