



**IAS 2011**  
17-20 JULY ROME, ITALY

**OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE – DAY 1  
EMBARGOED UNTIL 17.00 (CET), SUNDAY JULY 17**

**AIDS is at a scientific watershed, says IAS 2011 International Chair Elly Katabira at the opening of the world’s largest open scientific conference on HIV and AIDS**

**Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Head, adds that history will judge us not by our scientific breakthroughs on AIDS, but how we apply them**

**Sunday, 17 July, 2011 (Rome, Italy)** - More than 5,000 AIDS researchers, scientists, clinicians, community leaders and policy experts gathered in Rome for the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2011) have welcomed the growing momentum in biomedical research, but have warned that the benefits of these advances need to be evenly shared between the global North and South. Opening Session speakers also used this occasion to call on the Italian government to re-commit to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

“We are at a scientific watershed in the global AIDS response,” said IAS 2011 International Chair and International AIDS Society President Elly Katabira. “We have witnessed two years of significant biomedical advances, the likes of which we have not seen since the antiretroviral breakthroughs of the mid 1990s. The excitement around these advances in research - whether they be the CAPRISA 004 vaginal gel, the HPTN 052 study on treatment as prevention, talk around the path towards a cure, or the encouraging signs on PrEP and vaccines – is very much driving the debates and discussions that we are going to see in Rome over the next few days.”

“IAS 2011 delegates, like many professionals working in the international response to HIV, are understandably excited about recent scientific breakthroughs. However, we need to ensure that the advances we are making in research such as the now proven concept of antiretroviral treatment as a means of HIV prevention – is translated into action for people in developing countries,” said IAS 2011 Local Co-Chair Stefano Vella, Research Director at the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS). “Advances in science need to be matched by advances in resourcing. I call on the Italian government to recommit itself as a donor nation to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.”

In an Opening Session keynote speech, UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé said that gaps in access to HIV treatment within and between countries and key populations were an affront to humanity that can and must be closed by innovations in developing, pricing and delivering treatments and commodities for HIV, TB, malaria, reproductive health and other health issues.

“We have to remember that history will judge us not by our scientific breakthroughs, but how we apply them,” said Sidibé.

The IAS Conference series focuses on the translation of research into practice, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

### **Opening Session**

The emphasis on the real-world application of science was also reflected in today's Opening Session, which began with welcoming remarks by IAS 2011 Co-Chairs, a message from Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Republic of Italy, an address from Giovanni Alemanno, Mayor of Rome, followed by a community welcome by Filippo von Schloesser, President of Fondazione Nadir Onlus. Mr von Schloesser said the Italian government's waning commitment to HIV/AIDS was a major concern to people living with HIV.

IAS 2011 will reveal promising new data across all four scientific tracks – particularly in the areas of HIV treatment as prevention, HIV cure efforts, new drugs and new antiretroviral combinations, and the scale up of effective prevention and treatment interventions in resource-limited settings. From a scientific perspective, this is a time of optimism which was last seen in the mid 1990s, when the promise of combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) first became real. IAS 2011, while urging governments and donors to commit to continued and increased commitment to HIV and AIDS across all programme areas, will stress the necessity to respect the **Sydney declaration** – the declaration released during the 4<sup>th</sup> IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, which stated that 10 per cent of all HIV funding should go on research.

### **ENDS**

#### **Online Coverage of IAS 2011 at [www.ias2011.org](http://www.ias2011.org)**

The online Programme-at-a-Glance, available through the website, includes links to abstracts, as well as session slides with audio and speeches (all abstract findings are embargoed until date and time of delivery at the conference). Additional online programming is provided by IAS 2011's two official online partners: Clinical Care Options and NAM. Reporters and others can also follow key developments on the IAS 2011 blog at <http://blog.ias2011.org> or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ias2011](http://www.twitter.com/ias2011).

#### **About the IAS 2011 Organizers**

**IAS:** The [International AIDS Society](http://www.iasociety.org) (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 16,000 members from more than 196 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. Our 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 the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference and lead organizer of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, which is currently being held in Rome, Italy.

[www.iasociety.org](http://www.iasociety.org) | [www.facebook.com/iasociety](http://www.facebook.com/iasociety) | Follow us on Twitter [@iasociety](https://twitter.com/iasociety)

**ISS:** The [Istituto Superiore di Sanità](http://www.iss.it) (ISS) is the leading technical and scientific body of the Italian National Health Service. Its activities include research, clinical trials, and control and training in public health. It also serves as a major national clearing-house for technical and scientific information on public health issues. Among other things, the Institute conducts

scientific research in a wide variety of fields, from cutting-edge molecular and genetic research, to population-based studies of risk factors for disease and disability, to Global Health research.

**Further information:**

In Rome:

| <b>Onsite Media Centre Landline No. +39 068 0241 756*</b><br><b>*For international calls to Italy, please note that the preliminary 0 in the area codes of land lines must be included</b> |  |                              |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Email</b>   | <b>Mobile</b>                |
| International media:<br><br><b>Lindsey Rodger</b><br><b>Michael Kessler</b>  | <br><br><a href="mailto:lindsey.rodger@iasociety.org">lindsey.rodger@iasociety.org</a><br><a href="mailto:mkessler@ya.com">mkessler@ya.com</a> | <br><br><br>+39 348 686 8417 |
| Italian media:<br><br><b>Andrea Tomasini</b>   | <br><br><a href="mailto:tomasini39@hotmail.com">tomasini39@hotmail.com</a>   | <br><br><br>+39 329 263 4619 |