

PLENARY SESSION, WEDNESDAY 14 JULY
08:30 – 10:00, Session Hall A (Arena)
DAILY THEME: Ensuring Access for Youth and Women
SPEAKER BIOS:

Mary Crewe

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Mary Crewe has extensive experience with HIV/AIDS both nationally and internationally, and worked with UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNESCO before taking up her current role as director of the Centre for the Study of AIDS at the University of Pretoria. She seeks to develop new ways of looking at HIV/AIDS, to develop new explanatory frameworks and find ways for society to live through and beyond the epidemic.

Mary Crewe was chair of the National Department of Education and Health Committee for HIV/AIDS education in schools, and helped establish and manage the Greater Johannesburg AIDS Program, one of the largest HIV/AIDS centres in Africa, which provides education and awareness programs for young people in the inner city.

According to Mary Crewe, “Confronting AIDS through new explanatory frameworks that identify where there can be creative and positive responses to HIV and AIDS allows for the creation of new and vibrant societies that can address many of the historical wrongs through new understandings of social development, justice, rights and equity and democracy” (Centre for the Study of AIDS, South Africa, July 2003).

Raoul Fransen

Young Positives Foundation, Netherlands

Raoul Fransen has been involved in a wide range of programs to support HIV/AIDS-infected youths. His organisation, the Young Positives Foundation, is affiliated with the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+), one of the Conference co-organisers. Notably, he has been closely involved in a Dutch project to build schools and hospices in Zambia for children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid

United Nations Population Fund

Dr. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid was the first Saudi Arabian to be named head of a United Nations agency, as well as the first Saudi Arabian woman to receive government funding to study at a United States university. As executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dr. Obaid co-ordinates the world’s largest multilateral source of funding for population and reproductive health programs.

Throughout her career, Dr. Obaid has worked with governments and non-governmental organisations to establish programs to empower women and advocate for equality for women. She is also outspoken on the mobilisation of youth to combat HIV/AIDS. At last year’s World

Population Day, Dr. Obaid said, “By educating, empowering and mobilising young people, we can turn the AIDS epidemic around” (*Message of Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA, on the occasion of World Population Day, 11 July 2003*).

Dennis Altman

LaTrobe University, Australia

Dennis Altman is a widely published expert on politics and sexuality. Professor of Politics at LaTrobe University, Melbourne, and President of the AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific, professor Altman will next year take up a visiting professorship at Harvard University. His most recent book, *Global Sex*, is being translated into five languages. He also authored *Power and Community* (1994) and *AIDS and the New Puritanism* (1986), both relevant to HIV/AIDS, and his 1971 text *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* (1971) is now viewed as the definitive source for ideas that shaped the era of gay liberation.

In a recent newspaper article, professor Altman wrote, “Infections, illness and death don't provide the sort of dramatic headlines that are provoked by war and bombings. But if the AIDS pandemic continues to grow along current projections, it poses a human and security disaster far greater than either terrorism or rogue states” (*Australian Financial Review*, January 2004).