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## **XVII International AIDS Conference Opening Press Conference August 3, 2008**

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**CRAIG MCCLURE:** -the executive director of the International AIDS Society. I would like to, first of all, introduce the speakers for today's press conference, who are all speakers at the opening ceremony that will take place later this evening at the Auditorio Nacional.

First of all, the conference chair and President of International AIDS Society and Fundacion Huesped, Dr. Pedro Cahn. The local co-chair, Dr. Luis Soto-Ramirez, head of the molecular virology unit at the Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán, and coordinator of the Clinical Care Committee of CONASIDA.

Dr. Peter Piot, the executive director of the Joint UN Program on HIV and AIDS, UNAIDS, Former President Festus Mogae of Botswana. We are also - Mony Pen, you did arrive, welcome. Mony Pen, long-time HIV activist and senior community leader and Cambodia. Welcome to all the members of the panel and also to Prime Minister Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and St. Nevis.

The purposes of this press conference is to give you all a chance to ask questions of our speakers for this evening. After this introduction, each speaker will give a short couple of minute overview of their presentation for this evening. After each of the speakers has spoken I will open up the floor for questions. So, without further ado, I would like to introduce Dr. Pedro Cahn.

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. It is my pleasure, as president of IAS, to welcome you. First of all, I would like to acknowledge the important role that the media will be playing in this conference, helping us to spread the message of prevention and care for everybody.

In my talk tonight, what I will be briefly addressing a couple of points. First of one is the right of everybody all over the world, regardless of the country a given person has been born, to receive equal access to treatment, prevention, and care.

The other point I would like to address today is the issue of stigma and discrimination as one of the driving forces of the epidemic. We need to fight stigma and discrimination. The other issue that I will be addressing is the false idea that AIDS is getting too much money and is, in some way, harming the development of the healthcare services.

We have several examples to show that indeed it is the opposite. In those countries in which HIV services are starting to be provided, there is a general improvement in TB services, in sexual and reproductive health, STD care, et cetera.

And, last but not least, I will also address the issue that we need to get out of the darkness, the communities that are more at risk and more affected. This includes females, this includes kids, but also includes, and we should name this community by their names, men that have sex with men, sexual

workers, intravenous drug users, and all the communities that are neglected in many of the official documents in many settings. We are very worried about the wrong idea that we should stop fueling funds against AIDS. We cannot set back the clock 25 years and start again neglecting the epidemic. Thank you, Craig.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you, Pedro. I would like to turn now to Dr. Luis Soto, local chair for the AIDS 2008 Conference.

**LUIS SOTO-RAMIREZ, M.D.:** Good afternoon. As the local co-chair I will be in chair of welcoming everyone, and I do that for all of you. Welcome to Mexico. I hope that Mexico City treats you well, and I hope that the rain treats all very well today. I hope so.

In my presentation today, what I am going to do is to thank all the institutions and the government here in Mexico for all the help we have received to organize this conference, and after that I will focus on what is happening in the region.

What we have in the region is 62-percent [inaudible] antiretroviral treatment for all that need this treatment, but still we have to cover much more. We want to reduce prices in most of the countries, but we have to do it under the theme of this conference; universal action now. And I mean that universal has to mean universal, comprehensive, and coherent action, to put all the efforts together to decrease prices by region, and it could be better even considering all the world.

I am going to talk about stigma and discrimination, and you know that in Latin America and the Caribbean, discrimination and homophobia is something that is dominating our societies, so I will ask to stop that discrimination, to stop homophobia, but not to forget some other population, especially females that are more and more affected in the last years, and also indigenous peoples and migrants.

Finally, I am going to talk about the numbers. We are having close to 22,000 participants. This is the second largest conference and the largest conference in a developing country. We have something that is probably the legacy of this conference, the creation of more than 100 hubs, debate centers all of the world, and I am talking about more than 100, that we will have 20,000 participants. So for each participant that we will have here, we will have another one around the world.

And finally I will talk about the number of abstracts that we received. We received close to 11,000 abstracts, we will present 7,500 abstracts, and It is my pleasure to say that this is the first time in the history of these conferences that Latin America and the Caribbean is the second region to submit more abstracts to the conference. I think that we Mexicans, Latin Americans, are honored to have this conference here, and welcome you to our region. Thank you very much.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Many thanks, Luis. Next I would like to introduce Dr. Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS.

**PETER PIOT, M.D.:** Thank you, Craig. I will, in my speech, start with saying that we do have results now. It is the first time that in the history of this epidemic, that on a large scale you have results, and therefore we are entering into a new phase with new challenges, challenges of sustainability.

Think, for example, of the over 3 million people in developing who are now on antiretroviral therapy. This will require sustained efforts over several decades, but also that AIDS is not over in any part of the world. Thirdly, that dealing with AIDS now will require a long term response, well beyond the few years ahead of us. Think of the fact that for every person who is newly put on treatment, there are nearly three new infections in people.

And so the gap between those who are in need of treatment and those who are accessing treatment is getting wider and wider, so we need to intensify prevention in the long term to stop this epidemic, but also, in the meantime, we need to expand treatment. Three million people on antiretroviral therapy is good news, but there are double as many who do not have access to treatment. And for those who are saying that this is a dangerous entitlement, I say that entitlement is good. This is entitlement to life.

My speech is available at the booth for viewer needs, and I end with a call for unity in the movement and also for broadening the coalition, because It is thanks to a brilliant

coalition of diverse actors that we have come to these results, but now we have to team up with those people trying to improve health systems, dealing with sexual and reproductive health, mother and child health, and so on.

And finally, I would say that, as Luis has said, we already are seeing the impact of this conference on the fight against AIDS in Latin America. There was a conference of ministers of education and of health two days ago. They passed a declaration which goes very far in a commitment to offer, for example, sex education, including education on all forms of sexuality in all schools in Latin America, where there has been quite some resistance – and the Caribbean I should say. So these will be the main points of my speech. Thank you very much.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you, Peter. I would like to turn now to Ms. Mony Pen, the social mobilization and communication advisor for the Cambodian community of women living with HIV and AIDS.

**MONY PEN:** Thank you. Good afternoon. I just would like to share with you the brief of what I am going to talk about tonight at the opening session. Actually, I would like to start about my personal history, why I got involved in HIV/AIDS, and after that I will go to – to share with you about what happen in our region and also in other regions.

Let us say in Eastern European countries, in Africas, and also the issue around, I mean why is people living with

HIV/AIDS die? After, I mean, people are the worst they are very, how do you say, to commit to fight again HIV/AIDS.

So, I mean the fight [inaudible] contributes to the death also of people living with HIV/AIDS. And I am going to talk about the issues around the accountability at all levels, as well as the commitment of the political leaders, as well as the policy makers, the governments, and also the issue around [inaudible] laws.

And finally, I would come up with some recommendations for, not just for the governments, but also for the international agencies as far as the policy maker, and also as far as the community of people; what we can do together to change the situation to make the situation going better.

So if you have any questions regarding to my speech, I am welcome. Or, regarding to what is happening in our region or my personal life, I am welcome. Thanks.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. I would like to turn now to President Festus Mogae, the immediate former president of Botswana, president of Botswana from 1998 to 2008. President Mogae?

**FESTU.S. MOGAE:** Thank you. Because of the importance of this conference, I thought, coming as I do from one of the countries that is most seriously affected HIV and AIDS, and from a region which is the epicenter of the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, that is southern Africa, I thought I would briefly outline for you and highlight the progress that has

been made in communication and counseling, treatment and care, and prevention of mother to child transmission.

But, above all, call upon fellow African leaders and fellow Africans in general, that as we in sub-Saharan Africa remain the most seriously affected, we have to come up with innovative ideas and new programs and new activism regarding prevention, because as far as treatment is concerned, a substantial amount of progress has been made.

Of course it is uneven, but treatment is taking place to a lesser or greater extent in almost all of our countries. But, as far as prevention is concerned, that message is not getting through, in spite of our best efforts to date. That means more innovative and new approaches are called for, and I am appealing to everybody, but above all to my fellow Africans, especially African leaders, to do more, because what is needed is more than what we have been doing. I thank you.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you, President Mogae. I would now like to introduce Keren Dunaway-González, who joined us on the panel. Keren Dunaway-González is the editor of Llavechitas magazine, a UNICEF funded magazine directed at children aged eight to 12. Keren Dunaway is an HIV positive activist, 13-years-old herself. Keren? Ah, and she will be speaking in Spanish, so please use your headphones.

**KEREN DUNAWAY-GONZÁLEZ:** [Speaking Spanish].

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. As I understand, not everyone has headphones. Pedro, [Speaking Spanish].

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** Does anybody need translation? Yes. Basically what Keren said, Keren's a 13-year-old girl from Honduras, a person living with HIV. She is the director of a magazine that is edited for— printed for children and youngsters. She is very pleased to be here, a little bit nervous because she has to talk at the opening ceremony, but she will try to convey her experience as a person living with HIV and as an activist fighting against HIV. She will also tell us what her government is doing in regards to the fight against the epidemic.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. And last, but not least, I would like to introduce to you, Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, the prime minister of St. Kitts and St. Nevis, and also the chair of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS.

**DENZIL DOUGLAS:** Thank you. Let me say it is not St. Kitts and St. Nevis, but St. Kitts and Nevis. I want to, in my own statement later today, emphasize the appropriateness of having the 17<sup>th</sup> International Conference on AIDS here in Mexico, mainly because of the leadership that Mexico has provided in this part of the world and throughout the entire world.

I would say, in terms of its own health reform systems, and how as a result of that, there is access to the — access by the vulnerable groups to what I believe is critically important in moving our fight against HIV/AIDS forward. In fact, I understand that Mexico has introduced a national health insurance scheme, which allows access of those who are

suffering with HIV/AIDS and other diseases of course, to have universal access to the health services at the community level.

Secondly, of course, I want to put that in the context of the leadership that the president of Mexico has been providing. In fact, the president has recently taken over the membership on the board of the global fund that has been vacated recently by the Caribbean regions, and again of course, emphasizing the need for us in this part of the world to show our leadership in that regard.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight what the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS is doing within the Caribbean region. I would like to say exactly what it is, how it has been formulated, where the membership of this partnership has been drawn from, and to a large extent, how following a very single regional strategy in the fight against HIV/AIDS, this has been described by the United Nations as a regional model that can be replicated in other parts of the world.

I would emphasize of course that we are not overburdened by the challenge of HIV/AIDS, and our own commitment to ensure that there is universal access in terms of prevention, care, and treatment, by 2010. We would like to show what the Caribbean region is doing, how the membership drawn from different language speaking countries in the Caribbean region; Dutch, French, Spanish, and English, have

come together and are following a common agenda in our fight against HIV/AIDS.

And finally of course, I would want to emphasize that there is need for us to support the commitment that has been provided by the international community. In fact, if it was not for the international community, several countries within my region would not have been able to access funds from the Global Fund, and would not have been able to access funds that have been made available by the United States government, because we have been, to a large extent, described as middle-income countries.

And as a result of that, for awhile, we had been prevented from accessing funds that are necessary in continuing this fight. I am very pleased to be here, and I hope that at the end of this conference we would be better charged, we would be better educated, and able to move forward in this global fight. Thank.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you, Prime Minister Douglas, and if I can just say how pleased at the International AIDS Society we are to have such strong political leadership at this conference, which is real progress over AIDS 2006 in Toronto. Also this evening, President Calderon will be speaking, the president of Mexico.

I would like to open up the floor now to questions and ask you to please state your name and the media source that you represent before asking your question. Can I start here?

**SHANNON PETTYPIECE:** Hello. My name is Pettypiece, summer reporter with Bloomberg News. It seems that one of the themes that is emerging is infections in the MSM community, and a number of reports and activists have been talking about how the progress is not being made there, and I wondered if any of you wanted to speak to that, and what type of things you plan to do or need to be done to get to that community.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. Peter, do you want to start?

**PETER PIOT, M.D.:** Yes indeed. I will highlight this also in my speech that the epidemic will never cease to present us with surprises. When you look at Asia, for example, in every city, and a provincial city in China can be 4 million people.

And in China and east Asia where we have looked, there is an epidemic going on of HIV in men who have sex with men, and it reminds me of the same epidemics in the same populations in the west of the early '80s. It is at that extent. And at the moment, the response is not matching that new phenomenon.

There is progress as we reported earlier this week in UNAIDS, that about 40-percent of men who have sex with men are now reached with interventions, but the problem is that in many countries, homosexuality is against the law, It is all underground, and It is impossible to organize these programs. So it is really an illustration of where you need to combine

respect for human rights – human rights of every single human being including gay men, and classic prevention activities.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** President Mogae?

**FESTU.S. MOGAE:** Yes. Thank you very much. I said that above all I am here because I want to appeal to all Africans, but specifically, I want to appeal to fellow political leaders in particular, and to help push back the tide of the pandemic.

So I have asked the regional leaders, former presidents like me, and other leading African leaders in different walks of life, to form a group of distinguished person who will serve as champions for an HIV free generation in sub-Saharan Africa, and especially as I said in southern Africa which is an epicenter of the epidemic.

And I would very much want to invite you all here, especially the press, but every one of you, because you are special people because you are so committed to the fight against HIV/AIDS. I want you to attend the press conference on Tuesday at 5 o'clock at which I will be announcing this initiative, and showing some of the fellow leaders who I have invited who will be with me then, and we will be able to elaborate on what do we intend to do. Thank you.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. And just to finish on your question, there will be a whole range of sessions on HIV prevalence in men who have sex with men. There was a march against homophobia yesterday, and there will be a press

conference on Wednesday at noon hosted by the IAS and the Global Forum on HIV and MSM, looking at both issues of access, high prevalence across the global south and the north, and stigma and discrimination and criminalization of homosexuality.

And the global forum satellite two day pre-conference which ended yesterday on the issue. So you will find that issue addressed in many ways across the program. Mony?

**MONY PEN:** Yes. I just would like to add about what can we do in order to reduce the HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst the most at risk population. I think at the moment we can see a lot of policies that are supported by the government and also the international movement has been a supporter of discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and also against the most at risk population like the sex-workers, transgender, and also men who have sex with men.

So, mostly adult policy, adult regulation, gets developed by the high ranking people. They do not involve the community people or those who are at least infection population. So, in order to address this, as the community people, I would like to appeal to all the government, the policy maker, and also the international agencies, to look at again, about the policies that they are having right now.

And then I would like them to involve the community people to our level, not just treat us like beneficiary or the victim, but also treat us like an equal partner. So things are

going to be changed. I mean, if you do not involve us, nothing is going to be changed.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you very much. The second question is over here.

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Speaking Spanish].

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Pedro?

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** [Speaking Spanish]. I am sorry. Our expectation regarding this conference, we have already seen some results as Craig pointed out. Because this very week, before the conference started, we had the youth conference, 300 young people from all over the world discussing their issues.

If you were 24-years-old, you would not be allowed to be there, just youngsters were there. And really the meeting was very successful. We had also the preconference meeting from people living with HIV. For the first time in a couple of years this conference did not happen, now we were in the position to help them to have this conference.

And also we had the Ecumenical Conference, the faith based organization conference, so leaders from different religious organizations met to discuss their role in the fight against HIV. So we are just starting to make a difference before the conference starts.

Even, as you know, the president of Mexico met with NGOs here for the first time, and had an open discussion regarding all the issues linked to AIDS. Also, the Mexican

government started the negotiation – very successful, and you can follow on that, getting prices for the AIDS National Program. So this is before we start.

During the conference, we expect to have a large impact on the region first of all. Why? Because this is the first time that this conference has been held here in the Americas, in Latin America, and if we look back and see what the impact was in Africa after the Durban Conference in which, for the first time, we were able to discuss the monstrous inequity of having access in the western world, but not in the less developed countries, and after that the situation started to change.

And if you look what happened for instance in Thailand, where all this situation particularly regarding drug users was modified after our conference. If you look that some troubled policies were changed in 2006 in Toronto, and now, very timely with our conference, the U.S. has lifted the ban for travelling for HIV positive patients, people, really we are seeing a difference.

In regards to the scientific achievements, we know we are in a long way. This is not a 100 meter race, this is a marathon. But we are, as Peter Piot pointed out, we are really achieving some milestones. We have now 3 million people on treatment, and at the same time we know we need to speed up in order to cover the rest of the population.

This conference may serve as an opportunity to examine the accountability of different political leaders and donors in order to comply with their commitments for 2010. Be reminded that the United Nations General Assembly on UNAIDS in 2006, made a promise, made a commitment, universal access to prevention, treatment, and care, in 2010 for everybody.

Are we close to that? In which situation are we today? So this is part of the results that we expect. And in the scientific arena, maybe Luis, you would like to follow and tell us something?

**LUIS SOTO-RAMIREZ, M.D.:** There is so many things to say. I just want to add to all the pre conference symposiums or meetings that Pedro mentioned, that the federal government organized the meeting of ministers of health and education, and I think that that is an extremely important sense of this conference, because this is the first time that they meet together to talk about AIDS.

So I think that this is one of the main issues that these conferences are looking for; to push activists, governments, people living with AIDS, and the society in general, to talk about HIV. And if you talk about HIV you get more information, and if you get more information, you prevent HIV.

The other way to prevent HIV is human rights. I mean human rights is one of the most successful maneuvers, preservation of human rights is one of the most successful

maneuvers for preventing HIV, and we will talk about that. We have some other key scientific contributions. We will talk about why the vaccines are not successful, and we will talk also what is the reason because of the brain of HIV infected people is damaged.

We will talk about a lot of prevention strategies beside the use of condoms, or for example, circumcision. That is going to be a very interesting discussion around circumcision. We will talk about microbicides also, bad results for microbicides, but the future of the research in this area, and we will talk about prophylaxis after sexual exposure. So we will have a complete scientific achievements.

We will talk, unfortunately, about all the resistance that the virus is developing with the use of antiretrovirals, and especially when the use is not continuous. And then we will talk about the dispensation of the drugs to the people in need, and what the problems the governments and the health sector is having to provide all those drugs, even you have the money.

So we have a lot of different issues that we will discuss, and I think that the conference in itself is a success at this moment if you consider all these events.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. I would like to take a third question please, at the back.

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Speaking Spanish].

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** What does this conference mean to Latin America and to Argentina specifically?

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** So, I think that this conference, as I said, we should expect a large impact in the region. Not only because it is the first time that this conference is held in this region, but because our region is barely used to talk about some issues.

We hide the difference in terms of sexual preference. We do not talk about drugs. We do not talk about drug use. We do not talk about the different expressions of sexuality. We have to fight several times with some institutions that are clearly against the use of condoms.

So I think that if I have to take as a measure a kind of, I would say, to evaluate how this conference has given an impact in the region, and I take what the media coverage has been in this week before the conference on when we started, we are doing a good job.

I think that the meeting of the ministers of health and education, those quoted by Luis, is a good example because this is a level of political commitment that we never had before in the region. And let me tell you that having the president of Mexico in our opening ceremony, after having had a conference in Toronto, which the prime minister of Canada declined to come, and this was the main obstacle to have other excellencies with us.

Since the prime minister was not there, nobody could come, I think this sends a strong signal to all the political leaders in the region. It will be more easy to take them accountable in the future after this conference, and if you wish, we can talk about Argentina after the press conference because this is a particular issue, it is not in the interest of the general audience.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Okay. I would like to take another question. Here in front.

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Speaking Spanish].

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** What Mr. [Inaudible] is saying that why do the governments not take enough care about kids? We have 50 million orphans all over the world, we have 2.5 million kids living with HIV, and this is really a matter that should be addressed more strongly, and he is really pleased to have Keren here as part of our opening panel tonight.

**MALE SPEAKER:** [Speaking Spanish].

**PEDRO CAHN, M.D., PH.D.:** The question is regarding universal access. Quoting the UNAIDS report, the 2008 report, there are some numbers, but there are no clear objectives towards 2010, and the question is, Peter probably you would like to address this, if we are ready to say that we are moving our targets to 2015, particularly after the G8 declaration was not clear enough regarding political commitments towards universal access.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Peter?

**PETER PIOT, M.D.:** Yes. Let me answer the question on universal access. The fact is that there are a number of countries that have universal access to treatment and also to monitor child transmission prevention.

For example, Botswana is one country, and there are several ones in Latin America. However, in order to— universal access to HIV prevention for sexual transmission, that is nowhere the case and I think that the recent announcement, a very late announcement by Centers for Disease Control in the United States, illustrates again that the epidemic is not over and that timely information is so necessary for organizing good prevention.

So we were very disappointed that it took so long and that least they could have published this in the morbidity mortality weekly report. So I do not think that the ball is being dropped. I am more optimistic for access to treatment than for prevention.

There, I think there will still be a lack of leadership, and this is exactly what President Mogae just told about his action and his rallying other leaders because that is necessary. It is also a good sign that in Latin America and the Caribbean we had this declaration. Of course many declarations are not worth more than the paper they are printed on, but I think this is where all of us have to hold those who sign the declarations accountable in making sure it happens.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** And just to say, the multi-stakeholder coalition that plans this conference of UN organizations, community, organizations, IAS, Mexican government, and scientific community organizations, chose the theme universal action now, to highlight the fact that we need to keep up the commitment for universal access to prevention, treatment, care, and support, by 2010, and to highlight our fears that we may not be meeting that target and we may be losing that commitment.

I would like to take the question here, the man in the second row.

**DESMOND BROWN:** My name is Desmond Brown from the Caribbean Media Corporation in Barbados. Dr. Douglas, this question is for you. If you could share with us the specific challenges facing the Caribbean region as it relates to achieving universal access by 2010, and also if you could comment briefly on [inaudible] the U.S. president's emergency plan for AIDS relief, and how that will help the Caribbean as it seeks to achieve universal access by 2010.

**DENZIL DOUGLAS:** Thank you, Mr. Brown, and CMC. I think the challenge that we have in the Caribbean region at this time is mainly stigmatization and discrimination, and how we need to continue our concerted efforts to sustain our fight in reducing that.

I think it was mentioned earlier, from the very first question actually, that there are difficulties we experience in

terms of the Caribbean society discriminating against certain practices, which we know are associated with HIV/AIDS.

And we have got the difficulty of men having sex with men, we have got the difficulty of commercial sex workers, and how the Caribbean community and society is very much mixed as to how we should tackle that particular problem in terms of decriminalization of these particular activities.

I think someone pointed out earlier that these are still actually on the law books, and such practices are still considered to be criminal activities that are punishable through the laws.

What we are seeking to do at this level in the Caribbean is to raise the level of debate and information sharing with regard to these practices and how there is a need to seriously discuss decriminalization and how this can impact positively on our fight to reduce stigma and discrimination within the Caribbean region, and genially I would say within the AIDS global fight.

This is something therefore that we call for international assistance with. In fact, we've been saying that there is need for the attorneys general of the Caribbean region to come together to begin to look at the laws and to see how we can engender the necessary debate and discussion in the wider community as to how we can tackle this particular problem.

I would also of course wish to say that we still continue to observe, and even though generally the Caribbean

community, which is an educated community, knows quite a bit about HIV/AIDS, we do not see the related reduction in the number of new cases that we are finding.

And so we are talking seriously as to how we can engender the necessary marketing and the necessary public relations to get to the young people in particular, so that even though they have the knowledge, they can actually use the knowledge and have a reduction in the number of new cases in the Caribbean region at the same time.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** Thank you. We will take a question here please.

**FRANCIS BURDEN:** Hello. My name is Francis Burden [misspelled?]; I'm from Dartmouth College in the U.S. And as a student, I am very pleased there is such a youth presence here, however as one of the world's largest resources as far as education, as far as prevention, I ask you our leaders and our political leaders, what expectation you will hold for us and what will you do with the youth to help empower us and provide us with the opportunity to help with this global pandemic?

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** I can start, by saying one of the things we try to do through this conference is provide opportunities for young people to find the solutions that they have within themselves to carry on the fight. The youth program of the conference began in Bangkok and has been growing every time since.

I believe the program in Mexico is the largest ever. You are absolutely right that we are moving onto another generation now, and you will have the solutions that we have not been able to find. What we can do is provide opportunities for dialogue, scholarships for people to come to the conference. Through— outside of the conference, I think Peter you may want to add something about how UNAIDS is supporting youth activities?

**PETER PIOT, M.D.:** Yes. I mean I actually will mention that in my speech, the need for a new generation of leadership, and I think this conference looks better than the last one in Toronto where I knew every plenary session speaker and say there is something wrong. Either there are no young people coming up, or we old people, we block access, and it is the latter, and this is much better than before.

I organized a meeting of young people at Google in March 14<sup>th</sup>, and just we are seeing what are their ideas, partly from the classic AIDS movement and partly from other walks of life, and I think there is enormous energy.

Yesterday, last night yes, I went to the closure of the Youth Leadership Summit I think it was called, so there is something brewing, but now it is important that we provide that support as well, but it is not up to us to tell you how to do it.

I think, for example, when we take HIV prevention programs also, that using 20<sup>th</sup> Century communication ways, it is

just doomed to fail because that is not the way that you communicate with each other. That is what we are trying to use in UNAIDS, but it is hard to change that internally.

We have started with a youth intern program and things like that, but I could not agree more with you that as for the future of the epidemic, new leadership will be crucial. If we say we need a long term view, this is going to be with us for decades, than it has to come from you.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** I can take one question at the back, and if it is short enough we can have one more. Oh, I'm sorry, prime -

**DENZIL DOUGLAS:** Sorry about that. Let me- because there's a part of the question that he did not answer. I think I should say that before the congress expanded the use of funds to middle-income countries, and middle-income countries in the Caribbean region have been excluded.

In fact, initially the funds were only used for I think, Guyana and Haiti. Now with the expanded version of the use of the funds, middle-income countries like mine, like other countries in the Caribbean, which had been excluded, now have use of those funds, and therefore to a large extent there is available financing of our programs that will have to be targeted to the specific groups as I said, that we want to target to have universal access by 2010. So definitely it is a positive step for us.

**CRAIG MCCLURE:** I am very sorry we need to end today's press conference now. There will be many opportunities through the week. Thank you for coming and I hope you very much enjoy the conference and get what you need out of the conference to advance the need for HIV. Thank you.

[END RECORDING]