



Transcript provided by kaisernetwork.org, a free service of the Kaiser Family Foundation¹
(Tip: Click on the binocular icon to search this document)

XVII International AIDS Conference Closing Session August 8, 2008

[START RECORDING]

[Video Played]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to welcome you to the closing station of the XVII International AIDS Conference. I am honored to announce the arrival of the mayor of Mexico City, Mr. Marcelo Ebrard. Thank you. We will first hear the closing comments from our distinguished co-chairs, Dr. Pedro Cahn and Dr. Luis Soto-Ramirez.

PEDRO CAHN: Dear guests, colleagues, and more importantly, dear friends. I am here on my last day of President of the International AIDS Society, a task that I have undertaken with great pleasure and honor. AIDS 2008 has been the second largest one in the history of the International AIDS Conference, and the first one held in Latin America. We are very pleased to say we, Latin Americans, deliver.

More than ever, at this conference, we have faced reality and we have helped give this ability to vulnerable populations by naming these groups loud and clearly. Again, it is time to call all UN member states to actively include the most at risk population, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users, sex workers, youth, women and children in the HIV/AIDS response. And as part of the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Latin America, I can assure you this conference has been a milestone for the region and for the world.

A couple of examples. The commitment of the Summit of the Health Ministries of Latin America and the Caribbean is

already making a difference by promoting sexual education in schools. The open debate of the faith based organizations regarding their role in the fight against AIDS that took place last week shows us that nobody can consider him or herself a silence observer of other people's pain and suffering. This conference is the first one in which progress has been reported, both on the scale up and prevention.

But we have to keep in mind that we still have 5 billion sections for every two patients reached by antiretroviral therapy roll out. And we know that even doubling the number of patients reached by these scale up programs, it would be insufficient to reach universal access.

This conference will be recognized as the one, in the words of Mike Cohen, in which prevention and treatment got married. We look forward for the offspring, which needs to be the closing of the gap between where we are today and what we need to achieve. I hope this conference will also be reminded as the one in which the full contradiction between AIDS funding and public health strengthening has been solved.

We need more funds for AIDS. We need more integration with sexual and reproductive health, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted sexual services. What we need is access for all for appropriate healthcare.

We are glad to learn about our successes, but more than ever, we need to be reminded that, as we speak, thousands of human beings are conducting a preventable disease and thousands

are dying from a treatable disease. The high statistics behind each number, behind each graph, there are millions of people waiting for support, treatment, and care. Now it is in our hands, leaders, scientists, and community to keep our commitments on track and to fulfill these commitments we have made.

Universal Action Now will be tested in Vienna. The next conference in 2010 will be an opportunity to generate a large accountability event for all of us. I want to give a special thanks to all the people that have made this conference possible, and those who have worked so hard to let us enjoy a great event and a great week.

First of all, gracias Mexico. Thank you Federal government of the Estado Sudo Mexicanos. Thank you government of Mexico City, but overall, thank you, lovely Mexican co-workers and volunteers for your timeless worker support and your enduring, for your tireless work and support, and your enduring friendliness.

I also want to thank especially my co-chair and friend, Luis Soto-Ramirez. Luis, it has been a great deal to work with you in planning the conference. Gracias, thanks to all partners of the UN family and the community for their patients and input in building this extraordinary meeting. Gracias, thanks to all the governmental and private donors, as well as the pharmaceutical industry. Let me tell you that this conference would never have happened without the commitment of

our Secretary, Craig McClure, Matt Onoonat, Ed Gonzalez are just some of the members of the joint Geneva Mexico team, to whom I offer my respect and gratitude.

Again, thanks to all of you, thank you for being here, and thank you for helping us be today, as well as tomorrow, stronger together. On your way back home, be reminded that you can make a difference. People living with HIV and AIDS, and millions more at risk need you to do your part of Universal Action Now. Have safe trips and spread the word.

LUIS SOTO-RAMIREZ: I am going to start today with my last word, when I had received the conference in Toronto two years ago. Viva Mexico Seniorias. Before I start my talk, I would like to congratulate all the people that created this beautiful campus that is called AIDS Mexico Universal Campus.

This work was created during the days of the conference by people from the Advocate AIDS Awareness and is the result from the artistic point of view of what our conference is. Thank you to all that participated in creating this beautiful piece of art.

Dear friends, now AIDS 2008 is almost over. Mexico has been honored to host this seminal event and to welcome this conference to Latin America for the very first time. We have shared it with all of you at this XVII International AIDS Conference the successes, challenges, and hopes of Latin America and the Caribbean, but especially our determination to fight HIV/AIDS with no break. This conference is the most

attended by people from Latin America and the Caribbean, the second largest ever, but for many people, it simply is the best conference ever.

I would like to thank all the organizers, all the presenters, and all of you that came to Mexico for this unforgettable experience. I think that this is what an AIDS conference is for. In the past few days, we have learned many, many things. The fact that last year, more than 2 million people were newly infected with HIV, an infection that is entirely preventable, is simply unacceptable.

Despite the progress we have made, we are not on the course to meet universal active targets. Our failure to meet those commitments will have an impact on millions of lives. It is time to bring drugs to everyone in need. It is time for universal access now.

Today, there are many effective strategies to prevent HIV, and we citizens of the world must commit fully to their implementation. In part, too many places the stigma, discrimination, and homophobia continues to fuel counterproductive laws and policies that other mine prevention, treatment, and scale-up. Confronting such policies head on and demanding that there be changes is a central component of any HIV prevention strategy.

And it looks that this conference is the one on triple combinations, besides ART and the one that Bruno presented this morning on stigma and discrimination, prevention should include

information and education, safe practices, and prophylactic treatments with boosting mostly with human rights. It is time for universal prevention now.

It is time to give greater attention and resources to the needs of affected children and young people, and to react in improving the strategies that ignore the realities of men that have sex with men, lesbians, transgenders, sex workers, drug users, migrants, and indigenous people.

Ignoring the needs of children and adolescents, and women, this is for you, affected by HIV and continues to marginalize groups at greatest risks for infection, will only lead to more new infections and fewer people in treatment. We will pay for such foolishness in the future. It is time to end the stigma, discrimination, and social injustice, and to involve those mostly affected in public health policies. It is time for universal human action now.

HIV and global advocates have enough common enemies, chief among them, political complacency and inadequate human and financial resources. If the magnitude of human laws we are now experiencing, it is not enough to compel us to provide even the most basic level of healthcare to those living in low income countries, then we, as a global community, are morally bankrupt. But, most importantly, we will never get another chance. It is just time for universal access now. It is time for partnerships between clinical and social sciences, between scientists and activists, between governments and pharma, but

mostly between effective human beings. We can all make the difference. We humans should not be the problem because we are the solution. Thank you.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the federal and the city Mexican governments. Their commitments are an important part of the success of this conference. Thanks also to the magnificent IAS Geneva staff; I will miss you, I will also finish my term as the governing council member this year after eight years serving the International AIDS Society.

A special thanks to the professional and amazingly productive staff in the Mexican office. I love you all. I would ask you for a big applause to the always friendly volunteers Viva los voluntaries. Viva la Unam [misspelled?].

And, finally, thanks to my family and my friends, thanks for all the support. I am going to use a quote that Alex Coutinho used this morning, this Monday, I am sorry. Reach for the moon and even if you fail, you will be among the stars. We are right there, fellow Mexicans, we have to be extremely proud of this conference. We have pushed the agenda in Mexico, Latin America, and the world towards sex education, lower drug prices, and human rights. And we should not stop pushing. Good bye to all, adios, see you in Vienna, muchos gracias todos.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, a message from the community, Dr. Carlos Garcia de Leon will introduce.

CARLOS GARCIA DE LEON: Friends, colleagues, finally we do it. I am really, really, really proud and happy of this conference, probably the best that I have ever seen.

When we were having this conference, probably a baby was born with HIV in a very poor setting in Zimbabwe. A woman was injured based on her gender, whether in Lima or Peru. A couple of young gay men in Kingston, Jamaica were having unprotected sex since their relationship is clandestine because of the fear of being killed or attacked by their homophobic society.

Many sex workers here in Tijuana, Mexico were being obligated to pay for medical certificate that shows she is HIV negative to continue working. Perhaps an HIV positive employee was fired from her job, and an injected drug user not allowed to see his children in jail just because of his condition. And an indigenous in Honduras was there without a chance to have access to HIV services in his village.

At the same time, somewhere probably in Brazil, a positive one, was picking up her treatment. Certainly a baby, probably in Seattle, was born negative from his positive mother because she was tested on time and had the opportunity to access to comprehensive treatment. And that is the real world.

While these inequities exist, we should be working restlessly to ensure that everyone, particularly vulnerable and at-risk populations have full enjoyment of their human rights, including access to prevention, sexual education, always based

on evidence, care, treatment, and respect. That is why community organizations and activists are here. That is our challenge and that is our commitment.

In this level context to the conference, a very, very successful one from my personal point of view, impacted positively in all levels. Locally, we had at least three weeks of the hugest media coverage in this issue that we never had before. Thank you also for the media, really very good job that will be so helpful for us.

We also listen to our politicians and governments. Promises and speeches were done that gave us hope that a better condition is coming. But in the name of the communities, in the name of the people living with HIV/AIDS, we will be there to be sure that they make them a reality. If not, you will probably have problems with us, I promise you.

Now after this conference, we will talk about two Mexico's. One before the conference, and one that we will feel together, always together, after the conference. We, the communities, are part of the response and we will never permit a setback, we will never permit a setback.

As I said before, this conference was framed in the human rights issues. As never before, people living with HIV/AIDS, sex workers, indigenous and African descendants, gay men, and MSM, women, injected drug users, and youth were visible and had a better participation in the program of the conference in a very special way in our reverence, diverse,

warm, and energetic global village. I really enjoyed the global village.

For us, it was an honor to receive all of you in our country to learn together, to share experiences, and to fight commonalities, to strengthen response, and to put all our passion to achieve our goals. It does not matter if it happens in a little bit village in Mexico or it happens in New York. I want to thank you in the name, in the behalf of all the organizations, the Mexican organizations, to all the other organizations that cannot be here. We should ensure that the local communities and local organizations participate in their own conferences in their own countries.

I will also want to thank to all the CCC members, international and local ones, thank you very much. It was a very good learning process and we also find a way to put things in their own place. To the IAS staff, thank you very much in Mexico and Geneva, and particularly for the Latin American and the Caribbean organizations that were here with us.

Let us make the team of this conference come true, Universal Action Now. Thank you very much.

FEMALE SPEAKER: A message from the community pronounced by Red Reigoli [misspelled?].

RED REIGOLI: I am going to speak in Spanish because that is my native language and I want that this message will be very clear for the Mexican people. [Speaking in Spanish].

FEMALE SPEAKER: Maria Elano Ramos [misspelled?].

MARIA ELANO RAMOS: [Speaking in Spanish].

FEMALE SPEAKER: Jenny ben Jarto [misspelled?].

JENNY BEN JARTO: [Speaking in Spanish].

FEMALE SPEAKER: We will now watch a short transmission from the official AIDS Conference broadcasted from the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine of the University of KwaZulu, Natal, South Africa.

ZAHIR MOHAMMAD: Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Zahir Mohammad [misspelled?]. It has been my privilege to be the Chief Rapporteur of the Official Hub at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine of the University of KwaZulu, Natal in Durban, South Africa.

The status of the official hub for the XVII International AIDS Conference 2008 in Mexico City conferred to the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine of the University of KwaZulu, Natal; it is indeed a great honor and privilege.

The choice of the institution as the deferred official hub is not only an acknowledgement of the high burden of HIV and TB in KwaZulu, Natal, but also an acknowledgement of the pioneering researchers that the university has produced in the field of HIV and AIDS, as well as the great technological strides that the university has made in video and information technology.

Ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for this great honor and privilege. The highlight of the hub was the live interactive session with the plenary and the response to HIV

and AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Although the opportunity for interaction was limited, to the expert panel of Professor Abdool Karim, Professor Steve Reed, Hope Encoverse [misspelled?], and Dr. Serbi Malani [misspelled?] having each the opportunity to pose a single question to the panel in Mexico.

The clarity of sound and picture, as well as the momentous occasion generated great enthusiasm among the participants and set the precedent for future live, interactive sessions at the International AIDS Conference.

A total of 14 prerecorded sessions were webcast. The webcasted sessions at the hub adopted a thematic approach addressing stigma and discrimination, prevention, treatment and care, as well as health system strengthening.

Ladies and gentlemen, the achievement of Universal Action for AIDS Now requires sustained political commitment, a multisectoral approach together with intersectoral collaboration. Utilizing a multisectoral approach, the sessions were moderated by academics in the health department, faith based, and community based organizations, people living with HIV and AIDS, non-governmental organizations, as well as the Treatment Action Campaign.

A variety of individuals and organizations in the field of HIV and AIDS together with individuals from the community who have a keen interest in learning about HIV and AIDS attended these sessions.

For example, we had a team from a South African driven youth services who attended the sessions at the hub in order to gain information to empower their peers. The sessions generated discussions among the participants as to how some of the international best practices could be utilized in our localized environment to achieve better outcomes for patients in improving the health system.

The overarching message emanating from these discussions, to paraphrase Dr. Peter Piot of UNAIDS at the opening ceremony is that we should not simply buy a complicated disease and we should not complicate a simplified approach.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, it is important for us to acknowledge the key role players that made this opportunity possible for us.

The International AIDS Society, Craig McClure, Ron McInnis, Matt Oloone [misspelled?], Carrie Rothsingham [misspelled?], Nicholas Durand and his team, Professor Barry Kistnasamy of the Department of Public Health of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu, Natal, the Care Initiative of the University of KwaZulu, Natal led by Professor Umun Lalo [misspelled?], Dr. Sandy Palet [misspelled?], and Mr. Terrence Nia [misspelled?] and his team, the Department of Health, Professor Maz [misspelled?], Patrick Flombe [misspelled?] and Carmen Chetti [misspelled?], and the ICT and audio visual department and Mohammed Sheik [misspelled?]. Thank you very much.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our keynote speaker, Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, the Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

MICHEL KAZATCHKINE, M.D.: Dear colleagues and friends from around the world. Good afternoon. [Speaking in a Foreign Language]. It really is an honor for me to participate in the closing of this conference, a conference that has brought together 25,000 people from nearly every country in the world, an event that embodies the commitment and creativity that is our global AIDS movement.

MALE SPEAKER: Dear colleagues and friends please let the speaker speak, por favor.

MICHEL KAZATCHKINE, M.D.: Dear colleagues and friends. Okay. It is okay, it is okay, it is okay, it is okay, it is okay. [Speaking in Spanish]. Dear colleagues and friends, first, congratulations; congratulations to everyone involved in the organization of this conference, Luis, Pedro, Julio, Craig, and the wonderful IAS team. Congratulations and thanks to all those who spent many hours in the organizing committees and everyone else who has contributed to making this conference once more such a unique event. [Speaking in Spanish].

Above all, let me congratulate every one of you here, not just for making this conference a success, but even more importantly, for what each of you do in the fight against AIDS every day, and for what you have collectively accomplished.

Congratulations for being champions of human rights,
congratulations for defending the poorest and most vulnerable
in the world. [Applause]

Congratulations for aspiring to the highest possible
standard of health care in every single country.
Congratulations for standing up to stigma, discrimination, and
intolerance. And congratulations for your persistence in the
face of the epidemic. Congratulations, dear friends and
colleagues for keeping up the fight. [Applause]

These conferences are a moment when we come together
every two years to take stock and reflect on how far we have
come and how far we have yet to go. We can be proud of what of
what has been achieved in science. Today we can say with some
degree of confidence that a 20 year old diagnosed with HIV can
expect to live a nearly normal life span if he or she receives
and stays on treatment.

And now we are recovering human capital in the
developing world because of your efforts, having three million
people on treatment in developing countries is no longer a
dream. Think of what these numbers mean. More than two
million on treatment in Africa overall, 420 thousand in South
Africa, 85,000 in Mozambique, 90,000 in Ethiopia.

In China, 35,000 are on treatment. In Cambodia,
27,000; in India, 160,000. Here in this region Latin America
and the Caribbean, 400,000 have accessed the ARVs. Lives are
being saved on an unprecedented scale.

In addition, and contrary to some predictions, there is no alarming evidence of wide spread drug resistance. Data are increasingly showing that treatment access for women is broadly equitable. There is a substantial body of clinical evidence to show that drugs work well regardless of the setting.

And each time we have come close to exhausting the options for those in treatment, we find new solutions, new drugs. Do let me speak. [Applause]

The need to drastically scale up prevention has dominated this Conference. But let us also acknowledge that encouraging progress has been made. The number of pregnant women receiving ARV's to prevent mother to child transmission has increased from 10 to 33-percent in the last three years. Largely through Global Fund support, harm reduction programs have been established in many countries including Eastern Europe and Central Asia where there was absolutely nothing before.

At this Conference it is clear that we have moved on from the fruitless debate between prevention and treatment that plagued us in the past. We have seen a tremendous mobilization to better address the needs of gay men and other men who have sex with men. And the discussion about the preventive benefits of treatment has become more sophisticated.

We are more aggressive in our efforts against TB and HIV and understand much better the urgency of this challenge.

In Kenya, the percentage of TB patients tested for HIV

increased from 19-percent in 2004, to 70-percent in 2007. In Malawi, the proportion of those tested for both infections has jumped from 25 to 83-percent.

Surveillance of multi-drug resistant TB and particularly improved infection control must, however be higher priorities in the future. Above all, after 25 years of AIDS we leave Mexico knowing that our movement remains strong. In many respects leadership is passing though the South to highly engaged ministers and heads of states, to health care providers, to communities, to young people, to people living with HIV.

We can leave Mexico confident that in the course of fighting AIDS we have created the most dynamic movement for health and justice that the world has ever seen. And we are rightly proud of it. [Applause]

This is the result of your, your collective effort. This extraordinary coalition of the North and the South, men and women, black and white, rich and poor, gay and straight, old and young working together. So congratulations to all. [Applause]

But of course we can not leave Mexico with any sense of complacency. The Conference has highlighted many challenges that we still face. As we go back to our homes and as we think ahead to Vienna, let me highlight just four of the issues that will test our persistence and our determination for at least the next two years.

The first is human rights. AIDS advocates have given voice to basic universal rights like few others. The right to health and decent care but also the right to freedom from discrimination. The right to equality before the law. The right to privacy. The right to freedom of expression and of peaceable assembly. [Applause]

The right to social security. The right to work and to education. The rights of children and young people. The right for all to share in the advances of science. And yet, time and again, affected communities are still being denied these basic rights.

Women and girls continue to be raped subject to violence and denied sexual and reproductive health services and the basic means to protect themselves from HIV. Although there is no public health or economic justification for restrictions on entry into state or residence, people with HIV are still not able to travel freely. We welcome the steps taken by the United States to repeal such laws but 71 other countries must now do the same. [Applause]

Gay and other men who have sex with men still endure unacceptable oppression. The Mayor of Moscow says that gay men are satanic, while the Cambia president declares that he will cut off the head of any homosexual caught in his country.

Injection drug users in Russia are still denied access to Methadone and large scale harm reduction services. In some neighboring countries the programs that do exist are little

more than just a masquerade. This is the result of what can be called a deliberate blindness of the evidence that works.

[Applause.]

World wide drug users who do accept access to anti-retroviral treatment have among the lowest life expectancies of all people on therapy. In Iran, our physician colleagues are taken into custody for no apparent reason. Worldwide as we just heard this morning from Edwin Cameron, criminalization of HIV, misguided laws and prosecutions are hampering our efforts in HIV prevention.

And so advancing human rights is one of the key strategies that we have in the fight against AIDS. The fight not just against stigma and discrimination but the fight for human rights, for equality and for dignity must remain at the core of everything we do. [Applause]

My second point is about AIDS research. With a few exceptions, operational research that really guides and informs implementation is still under represented at the Conference. Too often investments worth many million dollars are being made in the absence of good data and too often we fail to learn and share our experience in scaling up AIDS programs.

The AIDS field has always been innovation, unafraid to criticize and challenge. It now needs to be much more creative in fostering collaboration between science and implementation so that the research becomes an integral part of all programs. Similarly we must also do more to link science and policy.

Thirdly, as we leave Mexico let us now strongly and confidently advance the health systems agenda. We know only too well that AIDS has highlighted weaknesses in health systems as never before.

That is why the Global Fund and PEPFAR are among the biggest investors in health systems in the world today. AIDS programs are investing not only in the hardware of health programs such as laboratories, clinics and other facilities, but also in the software that is needed to keep the systems running, drugs commodities and human resources.

Last week I was in Managua, Nicaragua and I was proudly shown the tremendous laboratory infrastructure that has been put in place with Global Fund support. Neither there nor anywhere else in the world is there evidence that such greatly improved conditions are a distortion of health systems.

[Applause]

On the contrary, the improvements I saw in Nicaragua and that occur in countries throughout the world, remind us that health systems exist now in the abstract but to deliver care and prevention for diseases that have names and for people in need.

This is why we leave Mexico with a strong consensus united in our commitment to the millennium developing goals as a road map for another seven years. I believe that Mexico marks the point when the tiresome and damaging debate between disease programs and broader health systems strengthening is

finally over. Let us continue to show that far from being the problem in global health, AIDS will be part of the solution.

[Applause]

The final point I wish to make and which should preoccupy us all in our advocacy from here to Vienna is about the sustainability of the global response to AIDS. The Global Fund has helped to change the development paradigm by introducing a new concept of sustainability.

One that is not based solely on achieving domestic self reliance but on sustained international support as well. We should therefore, be deeply concerned that with less than two years to go before our dead line for universal access the G-8 has committed little more than a third of the resources that is has promised to deliver by 2010.

If we are to ensure sustainability in the years ahead countries themselves must also do more to make AIDS and health a financial priority. In poor countries as well as some rich ones we must work to put in place the long-term building blocks of social protection, another area where the AIDS movement has begun to lead the way.

But sustainability is not just about resources, it is also about insuring that our response are the most effective based on science and epidemiology and targeted to those in need. Sustainability is also about partnership. The AIDS movement provides a remarkable example of community engagement in the development field. As the response to AIDS leads and

becomes part of a revitalized movement from global health we must never lose this vital principal of inclusiveness.

Dear colleagues and friends, my name, one that so many of you struggle to pronounce is Russian. So it seems to be appropriate that I should close with a reflection from Alexander Solcynytnehen, one of the greatest campaigners for the oppressed in the 20th century who died in Moscow as we arrived here last Sunday. In a letter to students written from exile, Stoclhenen said that, justice is conscious, not a personal conscious, but the conscious of the whole of humanity. Those who clearly recognize the voice of their own conscious usually also recognize the voice of justice.

Dear colleagues and friends by coming here, by following your conscious to join the fight against AIDS each of you is giving voice to a global fight for justice and to the conscious of all humanity.

I wish you all a safe journey home. Muchous gracias, mmerci, specia thank you very much. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: We will now listen to the inaugural speech of the incoming President of the International Aids Society, Dr. Julio Montaner, MD.

FEMALE SPEAKER: [Speaking in Foreign Language] Mr. President, last Sunday, the opening day of this conference, witnessed the first International Summit on Poverty Homelessness and HIV AIDS. Participants in that Summit issued a Declaration calling on governments of the world to include

the creation of housing for homeless people living with HIV and AIDS.

Over the last five days every one attending this conference have been made aware of this issue, witnessing the banner drop at the opening ceremony, the art installation walkway to the Global Village. You have heard about the health care workers kept in South Africa and Africa the demands for inclusion by sex workers, right here in Mexico. What these issues have in common is what fuels the epidemic not just the virus. Poverty and social economic marginalization.

This year for the first time a sex worker was given a seat at the plenary. This is a major step in deed, but if we are serious about ending AIDS we must address social and economic policies, that reinforce marginalization and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS like the financial institutions in South Africa.

We must aggressively affirm our support for policies that reverse this course. We demand that IAS to endorse the declaration on poverty, homelessness and HIV and AIDS.

[Applause]

We demand that the IAS include the theme poverty, homelessness and HIV and AIDS in major plenary in Vienna.

[Applause] We demand that the IAS solicit abstract on the theme, transgender people to sex workers to improvised people with HIV in the wealthiest countries of this world.

Housing is critical to stopping transmission of the HIV and is critical for treatment and care. Not to mention that housing is a human right. [Crowd chanting: housing is a human right]

JULIO MONTANER, M.D.: Colleagues, friends and distinguished guests, [Speaking in Spanish] I am Julio Montaner. I am the Director of the British Columbia Center for Excellence in HIV and AIDS. I am honored to stand in front of you today as the incoming President of the International AIDS Society as we close the 17th International AIDS Conference the first International AIDS Conference to be held in Latin America.

This is particularly meaningful for me. I am originally from Buenos Aires, Argentina where I spent most of my formative years; I also have a long standing fruitful collaboration with a number of friends and colleagues throughout this part of the world. Latin America has often been neglected in the context of the global AIDS crises.

Early returns clearly indicate that the decision to hold the 17th International AIDS Conference in Mexico has gone a long way to remedy this. For that, I thank you all on behalf of our amigos, Latinos and Americanos. [Applause]

Next I would like to take a moment to pay my respect to all of our delegates who made this conference a vibrant success. You came from every corner of the world bringing with you distinct and valuable insights and prospectives which truly

enhance our collective experience this second largest International AIDS Conference and the largest health related summit ever conducted in the South of the world. What a fantastic achievement.

I am proud to note that over 50-percent of the delegates of this Conference have never before attended International AIDS Conference further we sponsored over 2,500 delegates from 95 countries.

These carefully selected delegates have made a commitment to return home to actively disseminate the newly acquired knowledge as part of the concerted strategy to reach every corner of the world. Together they represent the new generation that will pick up the fight against HIV. We welcome you with open arms.

We are similarly in debt to the members of the media who join us in Mexico. They have worked tirelessly to cover all aspects of the Conference. Their work represents a fundamental piece of the puzzle that provides effective knowledge and [inaudible] of our proceedings. Thanks to their efforts, our message has echoed through all of the world and we thank you for that. [Applause]

I would like to personally congratulate our outgoing President, my good friend and true visionary, Dr. Pedro Cahn who together with Dr. Luis Soto-Ramirez provided us with their outstanding leadership and commitment of excellence that this Conference has demonstrated.

However, they could have never accomplished so much if it was not for the cooperation of a large number of people and organizations and in that context I want to recognize the key contribution of the Conference co-organizers and of course, very much in particular the incredibly diligent and dedicated IAS staff both in Geneva and in Mexico. To you, thank you from all my heart.

I want to also specifically highlight the contribution of people living with HIV in all aspects of the planning and execution of the Conference. As volunteers, as speakers, as delegates, as journalists and I also as committee members. The IAS is strongly committed to the greater involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS as described by the GPA principle our Conference is indeed a living testimony to that commitment.

Over the last week, we had the unique opportunity to hear the best and the latest in the field. I was extremely impressed by the quality of the presentations and the enthusiastic debate that often continued beyond the walls of the Conference Center. I was delighted to see so many wonderful presentations given by a new generation of highly committed participants, their youth and enthusiasm invigorates us and also reassures us that there is a generation ready to carry on the fight against this devastating epidemic.

Dear friends, as we conclude our Mexico Conference it is clear that a successful preventive vaccine remains elusive.

kaisernetwork.org makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of written transcripts, but due to the nature of transcribing recorded material and the deadlines involved, they may contain errors or incomplete content. We apologize for any inaccuracies.

Yet, we must not despair, the research in that regard must continue. However, the road ahead is clear. We have the tools today to effectively control the pandemic.

The key word emerging from this Conference is "Combination." Combination prevention strategies tailored to decrease HIV transmission. Combination anti retroviral therapy to dramatically morbid and mortality among those affected worldwide, combination antiretroviral therapy to also reduce community viral load as an aid to prevention, combination strategies to enhance HIV testing, combination strategies to reduce poverty, homelessness, and discrimination.

I am delighted to note as pointed out by Marco Viterio early this morning and already stressed by a number of the speakers, this week in Mexico, we have finally witnessed the marriage of treatment and prevention. Let us hope this is long lasting and successful marriage. [Applause]

We find ourselves at a critical juncture in the summer of 2008. Over the previous three decades we have collectively accumulated a tremendous amount of knowledge regarding what needs to be done to effectively combat HIV at the individual and societal levels. Yet, implementation flounders. We must work most diligently to overcome the ever growing implementation gap. We must recruit if not coheres the International political leadership to achieve this goal.

We must keep the pressure on the G8 leaders to follow up on their commitment to achieve universal access to

prevention, care, and treatment by 2010. Let us be perfectly clear, failure to enact the comprehensive sustained and multi-prong attack on the pandemic represents a crime. A crime against those infected. A crime against those affected, and a crime against those susceptible. Indeed it represents a crime against humanity.

Early last week UN AIDS released the 2008 report on the global AIDS epidemic. This was received with some degree of enthusiasm. The new report points out there are now 33 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide against a previous estimate of 40 million. Hardly a victory I would say.

A full 2.7 million people were newly infected with HIV last year. Yes, that is down from the three million in 2001 but this still represents a huge number an unacceptable number of new infections. Two million people died from AIDS in 2007. Yes, down from 2.2 million at the peak in 2005, still two million too many.

The number of children infected with HIV and AIDS fell to 370,000 in 2007 from 410,000 in 2005. Hardly a victory when optimal use of highly anti retroviral therapy should be able to eradicate neo-natal infection. In that context, 33-percent of pregnant HIV positive women now receive drugs to prevent vertical HIV transmission up to 14-percent two years ago. Still only 33-percent, that is shameful.

Over three million people resource limited settings are now on anti retroviral and increase of one million in the past

year alone. Yes, this is substantial progress, however, we are still playing catch-up, and we are falling further behind every minute that goes by there are five new infections for every two people starting anti retroviral therapy. This is unacceptable.

The thousands of men, women, and children becoming infected and dying everyday are the victims of our inability to transform knowledge into action. We know needs to be done; we must strive for universal action now anything less would be a crime. [Applause]

And, yes, there is hope. Last week we heard plans to reinstate PEPFAR funding for HIV and AIDS and tubucleriosis and malaria to the amount of 40 billion despite lingering concerns regarding the strings attached to this pledge by the current administration, I would like to thank the American people. You should be applauded for this tremendous commitment. Thank you very much.

However, this responsibility cannot lie solely on the shoulders of the America people. The world must follow their example; ultimately if George W. Bush got it, the rest of the G-8 leaders must get it too. Let me be clear, I call upon Prime Ministers Steven Harper from Canada along with the rest of the G8 leaders to match President Bush's contribution now. [Applause]

And we want no strings attached; we want the contribution to be sustainable and long-term. [Applause] Let me also stress, they can be no end to the pandemic unless we

secure full protection of human rights for those most vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

The rights of sex trade workers, injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, aboriginals and women as well as girls must be protected through legal and policy reform in every country around the world and now. Unfortunately we are a long way in this regard. Let us call on all political and religious leaders to make this as a reality now.

I would like to address a recent announcement by the United States to lift the travel ban for those living with HIV and AIDS. As you know, this has been a top priority for the IAS for many years. We are delighted to hear the news. Once this legislation is passed we will begin the process to bring international AIDS Conference back to the United States and I look forward to having the ban lifted during my tenure.

[Applause]

Dear friends, once again, I am honored to stand here today as the new President of the International AIDS Society. I want to sincerely thank the governing counsel for their trust as they provided me with this opportunity to serve you our members.

I look forward to working with my good friend Pedro Cahn, our esteemed Vice President, Ella Katriva [misspelled?] our President Elect and the future first African President of the International AIDS Society along with members of the governing counsel and our highly skilled staff led by Craig

McClure our superb Executive Director in Geneva and you of course the IAS membership to ensure that we continue to play a central role in the shaping of the fight of this devastating epidemic.

Thank you. I look forward to seeing you in Vienna in 2010. Safe travels [Speaking in Spanish] Adios. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Marcel Ebrand Mayor of Mexico City. [Applause]

MARCELO EBRAND: [Speaking in Spanish] Dear friends, this has been the symbol of the AIDS International Conference since the very beginning in 1985. As you will now notice, we have the commitment of our governments; we have the commitment of the City Government. I am going [Speaking in Spanish] to hand this to the representatives of Vienna. [Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: We are grateful to the Mayor for joining us today. Now please welcome the local AIDS 2010 co-chair from Vienna Austria, Dr. Bridgitte Schmied [Applause]

BRIGETTE SCHMIED, MD: Dear colleagues, dear, delegates/ Thank you very much. It is a great pleasure for me to invite you all to the 18th International Conference which was chosen to be held in Vienna. This largest international meeting on HIV is organized by the International Aids Society in partnership with the International Partners from the Civil Society, The United Nations, and the city of Vienna, the Austrian Government and Scientific and Civil Society Partners in Austria.

It is no coincidence that Vienna was selected to host AIDS 2010. Vienna has through history been seen as cross-roads between Western and Eastern Europe and it will continue to serve that role as host of the Conference. The Conference will specifically look at the challenges facing their merging epidemics in Eastern Europe in the context of hardest hits regions of the world and to the overall global response.

The International AIDS Conference is one of the most important scientific meetings and it is the most important gathering for release and discussion of scientific and political developments in the global response to HIV AIDS.

The Conference has a long lasting effect. It is more than a five day event and has a strong role as an accountability mechanism. It provides an important forum for drawing attention to the successes and the failures of governments and is part of an ongoing cycle of education, networking, promotion of best practices and educates in the fight against AIDS.

AIDS 2010 will also be an important meeting because it will coincide with the deadline the leaders set for the goal of providing universal access of HIV prevention treatment, care, and support. So this Conference will also focus on the major challenge of reaching that goal.

We have to contribute to raising awareness of HIV AIDS. We have to keep on acting, step forward and we have to move to solutions. We have the opportunity and the challenge to work

kaisernetwork.org makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of written transcripts, but due to the nature of transcribing recorded material and the deadlines involved, they may contain errors or incomplete content. We apologize for any inaccuracies.

together with all partners, groups and organizations, people living with HIV and community organization towards our common goals.

But of course all the knowledge, the innovative research will not be effective without the political support and without the political leadership that is essential in halting that disease. All of us are responsible for the next steps. And the call of universal action has never been more important than now.

[Inaudible] delegates, AIDS 2010 will take place in Vienna from the 18th to 23rd of July at the [inaudible]. We are looking forward to welcoming you in Vienna. Thank you.

[Applause]

FEMALE SPEAKER: Ladies and Gentlemen, the next speakers are the representatives of the City of Vienna and the Federal Government of Austria.

The first, Dennis Beck, is the substitute for Sonya Wesley, Head of the Executive Policy Group for Health and Social Affairs. Dennis Beck is the Manger for the Viennese Health Promotion Program and the Honorary Chairman of the [inaudible] Vienna.

And then, Clemen Auer, he is Director General at the Federal Ministry of Health and Women and in that capacity, one of the architects of the Health Reform in Austria.

DENNIS BECK: Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends, I feel very honored to be here with you and would like to express

kaisernetwork.org makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of written transcripts, but due to the nature of transcribing recorded material and the deadlines involved, they may contain errors or incomplete content. We apologize for any inaccuracies.

the best wishes of the Vienna's City Councilor for Public Health, Mrs. Sonya Wesley. She really deeply regrets for not being able to be here with us at this Conference due to another urgent official commitment.

I have been asked to invite you all most cordially in her name and also in the name of whole City government of Vienna for the next International AIDS Conference in our beautiful city of Vienna in 2010. I want say to you; you are all very warm welcome. Thank you. [Applause]

CLEMEN AUER: Yes, ladies and gentlemen, yes, next year it will be already 20 years since [inaudible] iron curtain which dividing Europe for so long into halves came down. And up to that moment 20 years ago, Austria was always, not only because of its geographic location in the center of the continent, for the neighbors and all the people, on the eastern side of this Iron Curtin, a beacon of freedom, democracy, prosperity and the personal pursuit of happiness for all individuals.

Austrian still is this beacon of light because we are one of the most prosperous countries in Europe and Austria is definitely a good practice example when it comes to good and successful health system and equal access to all services.

So on behalf of the Austrian Government, I strongly believe that Vienna is an ideal location to the 18th International AIDS Conference in 2010. I promise to all of you we will do the utmost to ensure that the Conference is a

shining beacon in the battle against HIV and AIDS and for a better life to all who are affected and threatened by this disease. I look forward to see you all in Vienna and we support strongly universal action now. [Applause]

The Community Representative of Austria is Elke Schlitz, General Manager for [inaudible 01:41:58] Vienna, a support organization for people living with HIV AIDS that provides anonymous and free HIV testing, information and professional counseling. Violent activities at the day center for people living with HIV AIDS as well as prevention and education programs.

ELKE SCHULTZ: Ladies and gentlemen [Speaking in Spanish] I am very proud to be here today as the Community Representative for the Austrian Community. We are very much looking forward to host and prepare the next Conference and to be very aware of the issues that have been brought up by the [inaudible] today and by all the speakers before me.

I will try to really integrate them into the Conference to take that these issues are not forgotten and taking along and really be dealt with. I can promise you that we have already made our plans and we probably copy some of the good things we have seen at the Mexican Conference.

We already have some good ideas of how to make the next World AIDS Conference in Vienna a real Viennese event so that you can really feel you lived through something Viennese and got a little bit of the Viennese lifestyle when you come to

Vienna and I hope to see you all in Vienna in 2010. [Speaking in Spanish.] I hope this is correct.

One little task for me is to announce a short video or Vienna just to introduce with what is going to expect you. There will be much more when you come to Vienna but this is a short overview of what you will see when you come to Vienna.

[Video shown]

[END RECORDING]