



Opening Session of IAS 2013

Sunday, 30 June, 18.00 MYT

Françoise Barré-Sinoussi

International Chair, IAS 2013

President, International AIDS Society (IAS)

Good Evening Ladies & Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests

I am happy & honoured to welcome you today, on behalf of the International AIDS Society, to the 7th conference on HIV pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention.

My very first words go to our local partner, The Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS (CERiA) and particularly, of course, to my co-chair Adeeba and her team. Thank you very much for the tremendous work and unswerving enthusiasm that made this conference possible.

I would also like to thank the Conference Coordinating Committee, the Programme Committees and all those who participated in the abstract review and selection process. You will all be able to appreciate over the

next 3 days the remarkable quality of the scientific programme they have put together, beginning tonight with Steve Deeks's lecture.

Since we last met in Rome, we have seen very promising achievements and progress made in the global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, in particular from the scientific side. These past years have confirmed the growing importance of research towards an HIV cure. Recent groundbreaking studies have demonstrated the benefits of very early treatment in achieving a state of long-term control of HIV infection. This is all the more significant, as you may have now heard, with the launch today of the new WHO Treatment guidelines in KL containing the key recommendation to start treatment below 500 CD4.

Recent developments in the use of antiretroviral treatment to prevent HIV acquisition will also be discussed, particularly in the light of the results of the Bangkok Tenofovir Study released few weeks ago. This is a significant step forward for HIV prevention especially for the region where injecting drug use is a major driver of HIV epidemic. It is also an important step forward for people who inject drugs who are so often omitted from clinical trials.

The conference programme will also highlight the growing concern around adolescents and HIV, co-infections, in particular with hepatitis, vaccine research and many other pressing topics in HIV research.

As you are all aware of, this is the first time that the IAS conference is being held in Asia. This is, I think, a great opportunity to bring HIV science closer to Asia but also to learn about the HIV/AIDS response & challenges in this region. I myself have been involved for many years in research associated with implementation efforts here in South-east Asia, in particular in Cambodia. I have been privileged to witness the tremendous efforts made by this country to combat HIV/AIDS.

Thanks to these efforts, Cambodia has indeed achieved access to treatment to all in need. At least, this was true until WHO announced its new recommendations this morning. Today, Cambodia is on track to become one of the few countries in the world to successfully reverse its HIV epidemic. According to the WHO's recent projections, Cambodia may well eliminate new infections by 2020. You will have the chance to hear more about this success story in Monday's plenary. Personally, I believe

this story is the « proof of concept », as we scientists say, that it is NOT all about money. Tackling HIV is also largely dependent on the willingness, commitment & energy of national leaders to implement scientifically sound policies.

Many Asian countries experienced concentrated epidemics and there is an immense need to address key-affected populations which are still left behind in many countries. This conference will be an opportunity to highlight the many barriers that are impeding effective access for all to prevention and care. We all know that stigma & discrimination are still amongst the key barriers. Respect for human rights is fundamental to us ending the AIDS epidemic.

As everybody now is well aware, Mr Nelson Mandela is today critically ill.

I just wanted to express on behalf of IAS that our deepest thoughts are with him, his family and his beloved people of South Africa.

I wish you a successful conference and a memorable stay in Kuala Lumpur. I would now like to ask my local co-chair Adeeba to say a few words.

Thank You.