



## FACT SHEET

### **Introduction**

The XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, persons living with HIV and other individuals committed to ending the pandemic. It is a chance for stakeholders to take stock of where the epidemic is, evaluate recent scientific developments and lessons learnt, and collectively chart a course forward.

AIDS 2010 will also be the mostly widely watched AIDS event in the world. An estimated 25,000 participants, including 2,500 journalists from more than 100 countries, are expected to attend and news coverage of the conference is an important source of public awareness and education.

The selection of the AIDS 2010 host city is a reflection of the central role Vienna has played in bridging Eastern and Western Europe, and will allow for an examination of the epidemic's impact in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), including issues related to human rights and injecting drug use.

### **Rights Here, Right Now**

The AIDS 2010 conference theme emphasizes the central importance of protecting and promoting human rights as a prerequisite to a successful response to HIV. The right to dignity and self-determination for key affected populations, to equal access to health care and life-saving prevention and treatment programmes, and the right to evidence-based interventions based on evidence, rather than ideology, are all incorporated in this urgent demand for action.

*Rights Here, Right Now* emphasizes that concrete human rights measures need to be in place to protect those most vulnerable to and affected by HIV, especially women and girls, people who use drugs, migrants, prisoners, sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender persons.

*Rights Here, Right Now* emphasizes the location of the conference in Vienna, chosen in part for its proximity to EECA, a region experiencing one of the fastest growing epidemics that is fuelled primarily by injecting drug use. It also underscores this critical moment in time – with the 2010 deadline that world leaders set for providing universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support on the immediate horizon. *Rights Here, Right Now* is a call for leadership, accountability and action.

## **Conference Organizers**

AIDS 2010 is convened by the International AIDS Society (IAS), the world's leading independent membership association of HIV professionals around the world. IAS houses the international conference secretariat in Geneva and a local conference secretariat in Vienna.

Local and regional partners include:

- City of Vienna
- Government of Austria
- Community Forum Austria, including AIDS Hilfe Wien
- Austrian AIDS Society
- East European & Central Asian Union of PLWH (ECUO)
- European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS).
- European Commission
- Local Scientific Leadership

International partners for AIDS 2010 include:

- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), including its co-sponsors, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO)
- Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+)
- International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW)
- World YWCA
- Caribbean Vulnerable Communities (CVC)

## **The Conference Programme**

The programme will present new scientific evidence and opportunities for structured dialogue on the major issues facing the global response to HIV. A variety of session types – from abstract-driven presentations to symposia, bridging sessions, plenaries and special sessions – are used to meet the needs of various participants. Workshops and programme activities, including the Global Village (a dynamic community space that has become a highlight of the conference for many) and Youth Programme, will contribute to professional development and networking (submissions open online from 1 December 2009 to 10 February 2010). Independently organized satellite meetings, affiliated events or exhibitions offer opportunities to discuss specific issues or learn about various organizations.

### *Programme Planning*

Overall planning for the conference rests with the Conference Coordinating Committee (CCC). The CCC is Chaired by Dr. Julio Montaner, IAS President and Director of the British Columbia (BC) Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS in Vancouver, BC, Canada and Local Conference Co-Chair Dr. Brigitte Schmied, President of the Austrian AIDS Society in Vienna.

Three international planning committees – the Scientific Programme Committee, Community Programme Committee and Leadership and Accountability Programme Committee – are responsible for developing the programme. The planning committees and CCC include representatives of scientific and civil society leaders from all over the world, including focal points from Austria and EECA. The committees began meeting in May 2009 and will complete the process of building the programme by May 2010.

### *Abstract-driven Programme*

More than half of all sessions offered at the conference will be abstract-driven sessions, which will be selected using a blind, peer-reviewed process. The abstract-driven component of the conference offers the highest caliber knowledge and peer-reviewed research. Abstracts will be presented in six tracks representing the major areas of HIV and AIDS research:

- Track A:** Basic Science
- Track B:** Clinical Sciences
- Track C:** Epidemiology and Prevention Sciences
- Track D:** Social and Behavioural Sciences
- Track E:** Economics, Operations Research, Care and Health Systems
- Track F:** Policy, Law, Human Rights and Political Science

In 2008, organizers received over 10,500 regular abstract submissions, accepting 7,714 for presentation and/or inclusion in the CD-ROM. Standard abstract submissions will be accepted online from 1 November 2009 to 10 February 2010. Mentoring is available to less experienced abstract submitters through the Abstract Mentor Programme. See the conference website for details.

### **Key Topics**

It's still early to know what the AIDS 2010 programme will look like, however a few overarching issues are likely to help shape the meeting. AIDS 2010 will highlight the critical connection between human rights and HIV; a dialogue begun in earnest in Mexico City in 2008. The EECA region is home to an estimated 1.5 million people living with HIV, cases that are driven primarily by injecting drug use. An important focus of the conference will therefore be a discussion of how evidence-based policies and programmes for people who inject drugs, including harm reduction strategies, can be expanded. The current state of the epidemic in other regions – including southern Africa, which remains the most heavily affected region of the world – will also be explored in detail.

Given the December 2010 deadline for universal access set by world leaders, the conference will coincide with a major push for expanded access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. With a global economic crisis threatening to undermine public investments, AIDS 2010 will help keep HIV on the front burner. It is also a chance to demonstrate how HIV investments contribute to broader health and development goals, including the strengthening of health systems in low- and middle-income countries.

### **Broadening Access to the Programme**

During the conference the AIDS 2010 website will feature comprehensive online programming to ensure the distribution of important evidence and information presented to the many people working in the field who are unable to travel to Vienna. This includes online access to the full text of all accepted abstracts and to *rappporteur* reports from most sessions, as well as multi-lingual audio files and speaker slides. Webcasts and related resources for all major sessions will be provided, and online partners Clinical Care Options, Inc. and NAM will provide scientific analysis and reporting of the abstract-driven programme.

A new feature in 2008 was the introduction of hubs (remote viewing locations). An estimated 2,000 people attended 136 hubs in 49 countries to participate remotely in AIDS 2008. For Vienna, there will be three official hubs in Eastern Europe, with many others organized independently around the world.

The official language of AIDS 2010 is English. However, all sessions (with the exception of workshops, poster discussions and satellite meetings) will be interpreted simultaneously into Russian and the AIDS 2010 website is available in both English and Russian.

The AIDS 2010 budget includes funding for approximately 850 scholarships for delegates from primarily low- and middle-income countries. In addition, registration fees are set according to a two-tiered fee structure, with lower fees for delegates from low- and middle-income countries (based on World Bank classifications). Online registration opens on 1 December 2009 and scholarship applications open on 8 December 2009.