

## **IAS Applauds White House Announcement of Repeal of the United States' Discriminatory and Ineffective HIV Entry and Immigration Ban**

*New Policy Reflects Scientific Evidence and Sound Public Health Practices*

**30 October 2009 (Geneva, Switzerland)** – The International AIDS Society (IAS) applauds U.S. President Barack Obama's announcement today that the nation's HIV entry and immigration ban is to be lifted, effective in 60 days.

"With today's announcement, U.S. entry and immigration policy relative to HIV will be rooted in science and sound public health practices, rather than reflecting the fear and bigotry that drove its policy for so many years," said Julio Montaner, President of the International AIDS Society. "Overturning these types of laws around the world is crucial to combating stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and we hope other nations with such laws and policies in place will soon follow suit."

President Obama made the announcement in conjunction with his signature to extend the Ryan White CARE Act, which funds HIV treatment and care services. With this announcement, the ruling to lift the ban is to be published in the *Federal Register* which, following a 60-day waiting period, will signal the official end of the ban. As President Obama noted in his remarks, the approval of this bill will go a step further to enhance U.S. global leadership on HIV/AIDS by aligning scientific progress on HIV, public health evidence and U.S. public policy.

The IAS has opposed the "U.S. HIV-specific entry ban" in principle and practice since 1990. The IAS does not hold its conferences in countries that restrict short-term entry of people living with HIV and AIDS and/or require prospective HIV-positive visitors to declare their HIV status on visa application forms or other documentation required for entry into the country. The International AIDS Conference has not been held in the United States for the past two decades. The IAS announced that it would consider holding the 2012 International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC, if the ban were lifted.

"IAS is proud of its longstanding leadership and commitment to this issue. We congratulate the U.S. Government, and the many advocates from the fields of science, medicine, law, faith, and constituent groups most affected, who have long fought for the repeal of the HIV travel ban in the United States," said IAS Executive Director Robin Gorna.

Currently, some 67 countries around the world have some sort of HIV-specific laws that restrict the entry, stay or residence of people living with HIV. IAS member experts in infectious disease and public health have long held that laws and policies barring the entry, stay or residence of HIV-positive people do not protect the public health and may in fact impede effective responses to HIV. Such "travel restrictions" prevent HIV-positive people from visiting relatives in other countries, doing business

or studying abroad, migrating for work reasons, participating in international humanitarian and development efforts, serving in consular services, seeking or receiving asylum, attending conferences, vacationing, uniting with family members or adopting HIV-positive children from abroad.

For more information on countries with HIV entry, stay and residence restrictions, please go to <http://www.hivrestrictions.org>.

The **International AIDS Society** (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with 14,000 members from 190 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. Our members include researchers from all disciplines, clinicians, public health and community practitioners on the frontlines of the epidemic, as well as policy and programme planners. The IAS is the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference, which will next be held in Vienna, Austria in July 2010.

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For more information:

Ron MacInnis, Senior Policy Advisor  
International AIDS Society  
[Ron.MacInnis@iasociety.org](mailto:Ron.MacInnis@iasociety.org)  
+1 202 887 0200