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## **VIENNA SELECTED TO HOST WORLD'S LARGEST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HIV/AIDS IN 2010**

### **CITY'S PROXIMITY TO EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, AND STRONG COMMITMENT TO HIV BY GOVERNMENT, SCIENTISTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY AMONG THE REASONS VIENNA SELECTED TO HOST XVIII INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE**

(16 May 2008 – Vienna, Austria) Vienna, Austria has been chosen to host the XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010), the largest international meeting on HIV, where every two years 25,000 participants representing all stakeholders in the global response to HIV meet to assess progress and identify future priorities.

AIDS 2010 is organized by the International AIDS Society (IAS), in partnership with government, scientific and civil society partners in Austria and international partners from civil society and the United Nations. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the IAS is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals.

"The International AIDS Society and its partners are extremely pleased to partner with the City of Vienna, the Government of Austria and local scientific and community leaders, who have a long history of leadership on HIV issues," said IAS President-elect, Dr. Julio Montaner, Director of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and International Conference Chair for AIDS 2010. "Because the 2010 conference will coincide with the deadline that world leaders set for the goal of providing universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, all eyes of the world will be upon Vienna."

"Vienna has through history been seen as a crossroads between Western and Eastern Europe, and it will continue to serve that role as host of the conference," said Dr. Montaner. "The conference is an opportunity to look specifically at the challenges facing the emerging epidemics in Eastern Europe in the context of hardest hit regions around the world and the overall global response."

"The International AIDS Conference is the most important gathering for the release and discussion of scientific, programmatic and policy developments in the global response to HIV/AIDS. As the largest and most diverse international gathering devoted to a global health issue, the conference brings together the movement of people responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic to share their lessons and together stake out the road ahead. We look forward to welcoming delegates to Vienna," said Local Conference Chair, Brigitte Schmied of the Austrian AIDS Society.

According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an estimated 150,000 people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were newly infected with HIV in 2007 bringing the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in the region to 1.6 million. This compares with 630,000 PLHIV in 2001, an increase of 150%. Worldwide, an estimated 33.2 million people are living with HIV and more than 2.1 million people died of AIDS in 2007.

AIDS 2010 will be held from 18 to 23 July 2010 at the Reed Messe Wien.

The conference is organized by the IAS in partnership with a number of international bodies and local partners, including:

- UNAIDS, and its co-sponsors
- 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);
- two other international civil society partners (to be confirmed at a later date)

AIDS 2010 will be the eighteenth in this series of international AIDS conferences. In August 2008, it will be held in Mexico City, Mexico, and the previous meeting was held in Toronto, Canada in 2006. With more than 2,500 international journalists expected to attend, the conference is the single most widely covered health event in the world.

Vienna was selected to host AIDS 2010 following an evaluation of candidate cities by the IAS in consultation with its international partners. Candidate cities were evaluated by the IAS Governing Council according to three criteria: impact on the epidemic, sufficient infrastructure, and freedom of movement and travel for people living with HIV/AIDS. According to a policy of non-discrimination first adopted by the IAS Governing Council in 1992, the Society will not hold its conferences in countries that restrict short term entry of people living with HIV/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.

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