Washington, D.C. office for the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) opens to begin preparations for world’s largest HIV/AIDS-related gathering

Local office to work with DC-area community and across the U.S. to engage diverse audiences

21 March 2011 (Washington, D.C.) — Marking another key milestone in the lead up to the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012), the conference’s local office is open and actively engaged in outreach activities and logistical preparations for the biennial conference expected to convene more than 20,000 delegates from nearly 200 countries. AIDS 2012 will be held in Washington, D.C. from 22 to 27 July 2012 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. The conference website, www.aids2012.org, is also live.

“The local office is the focal point for our activities in Washington, D.C. and in the U.S. as we prepare for AIDS 2012,” said Elly Katabira, International Chair of AIDS 2012 and President of the International AIDS Society (IAS). “Given the tremendous enthusiasm about the return of the conference to the United States and to Washington, D.C., we opened the local office earlier in the organizing process than we normally do and are already seeing tremendous levels of activity and energy that we intend to build on over the next 16 months.”

Tiffany Chester, who most recently worked for Destination DC, the city’s official convention and visitors’ bureau, is head of the office. Under the leadership of the international conference secretariat based in Geneva, the local office will liaise with local officials and interested stakeholders, conduct outreach in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and in communities across the U.S., help coordinate conference volunteers, and work with local media.

“This period leading up to the conference provides an important opportunity to raise the profile of the HIV/AIDS responses in the host city and country and to get more people actively involved,” said Dr. Diane Havlir, U.S. Co-Chair of AIDS 2012. “The AIDS 2012 Conference Coordinating Committee is especially committed to highlighting the disparities in access to HIV care in the U.S. and the disproportionate impact that HIV has on African Americans and other communities of colour in Washington, D.C. and the country as a whole.”

The conference leadership and the local office are working closely with local and national organizations, local and federal officials, and the hospitality industry to plan for AIDS 2012. “The response to date from the community demonstrates how eager the city is to use the conference as an opportunity for progress,” said Chester. “We look forward to working with the DC Community Coalition, the recently announced Mayor’s Host Committee and a wide range of local and national organizations to ensure that we involve the broadest possible array of people in the conference and heighten its impact to the greatest extent possible.”

Conference registration, individual hotel reservations, and abstract submissions will open in December 2011. As more details about these and other matters become available, they will be posted at www.aids2012.org.

The International AIDS Conference is the largest gathering of professionals working in the field of HIV, including people living with HIV and other leaders in the HIV response. It plays a fundamental role in shaping the global response to HIV and in keeping HIV and AIDS on the international political agenda.
Conference organization:

AIDS 2012 is convened by the International AIDS Society and the conference’s permanent partners are the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+); the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO); the International Community of Women with HIV/AIDS (ICW) and the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The U.S.-based Black AIDS Institute; the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH); the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA); the National Institutes of Health (NIH); the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) at the White House; and the U.S. Positive Women’s Network (USPWN) are serving as local partners.

About the IAS
The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world’s leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 16,000 members from more than 196 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 and lead organizer of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, which will be held in Rome, Italy in July 2011.

www.iasociety.org | www.ias2011.org

For more information about this release:

Tiffany Chester (Washington, D.C.)
Head of Local Secretariat
Email: Tiffany.Chester@aids2012.org
Tel: 011 202-442-8391

Scott Sanders (Washington, D.C.)
AIDS 2012 Communications Consultant
Email: scott@highnooncommunications.com
Tel: 001 202-332-2303/ 011 202-486-8761

Sian Bowen (Geneva, Switzerland)
Senior Manager, AIDS 2012 Senior Communications Manager
Email: Sian.Bowen@iasociety.org
Tel:  +41 22 710 0864

Lindsey Rodger (Geneva, Switzerland)
AIDS 2012 Communications and Media Officer
Email: Lindsey.Rodger@iasociety.org
Tel:  +41 22 710 0822

For general inquiries:
Email: info@aids2012.org
Tel: +41 22 710 0800