



AIDS 2014 Opening Addresses (Embargoed 19:00, 20/7/14)

Prof. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi

Prof. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi is a French virologist who was awarded the 2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). She is one of the leading contributors to HIV science after more than 35 years of research, having co-authored 240 scientific publications and registered 17 scientific patents. She is Director of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Institute Pasteur in Paris, the current president of the International AIDS Society (IAS) and International Conference Chair for AIDS 2014.

Speech

Deputy Prime Minister, Premier, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would love to be telling you that we were opening this conference in happier times. The extent of the loss of our colleagues and friends is still hard for me to comprehend or express. We grieve alongside all of those throughout the world who have lost family and friends in this senseless tragedy.

I strongly believe that all of us being here for the next week to discuss, to debate, and to learn is indeed what our colleagues who are no longer with us would have wanted. We dedicate AIDS 2014 to them. We will remember their legacy and forever keep them in our hearts.

For the past two years, many people have been working very hard to put together this conference and make it hopefully once again a place where top level science as well as national and global leadership will be showcased. I'd like to begin by thanking everyone, who from close or far have contributed to the preparation of this conference, starting with the woman standing right beside me, Sharon Lewin. Sharon, you have been the most enthusiastic, passionate and energetic co-chair I could have dreamt of.

Since we last met two years ago, we have seen much scientific progress in the fight against AIDS and co infections. Research on HIV cure and vaccines have generated many results, some encouraging, some more disappointing that will be summarized during the plenary talks this week. The advent of new drugs to treat chronic HCV infection has the potential to completely change the global landscape in this area.

The tremendous scale up of HIV programmes has begun to reverse the spread of HIV. According to the new UNAIDS report released few days ago, nearly 14 million people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries are now being treated. Millions of lives are saved. But this is far from being enough and we still have plenty to do!



We need to step up the pace. This official AIDS 2014 theme reminds us that many countries are still struggling to address their HIV epidemic and that Key Affected Populations are consistently being left behind. This will certainly be a key focus of this week, beginning right here tonight on this stage.

Yes, I am sad to say, the cruel reality is that in every region of the world stigma and discrimination continue to be the main barriers to effective access to health. We need again to shout out loud that we will not stand idly by when governments, in violation of all human right principles, are enforcing monstrous laws that only marginalize populations that are already the most vulnerable in the society. In this regard, I urge you to sign the Melbourne Declaration that calls for the abolition of all kind of inequities and the respect of fundamental Human rights.

As the 2015 Millenium Development Goals targets draw closer, I strongly believe that we must increase our collaboration with other disciplines at every level of the response and work together to simply improve the health of all those in need.

Our colleagues were traveling because of their dedication to bringing an end to AIDS and improve global health. Our determination to continue their work honours their commitment.

Let's show the world that neither brutality nor hatred can stop us.

Let's join our forces to build a better future for all.

I wish you all an inspirational, energizing and thought provoking conference.

Thank you!

ENDS

For further information please contact:

In Melbourne, Australia
Sian Bowen, Senior Manager, IAS Communications
Senior Manager, Communications, IAS & AIDS 2014
Email: Sian.Bowen@iasociety.org
Mob: +61 488 104 186

Michael Kessler, Australia
IAS Media Consultant
Email: michael.kessler@inton-media.com
Mobile: +61 447 047 150