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EMBARGO: None (for immediate release)

ICASA, Africa's largest AIDS Conference to be held in Cape Town in December, 2013

The 17th International Conference on AIDS and STI's in Africa (ICASA 2013), Africa's largest AIDS Conference, will offer a unique platform ahead of 2015 to assess progress and developments in relation to HIV and AIDS.

ICASA will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 7 – 11 December 2013 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC).

This year's ICASA is being held two years to 2015, the target date for the UN Millennium Development Goals. ICASA will be important in assessing the achievements made and the challenges ahead. The theme for ICASA 2013 is *Now More than Ever: Targeting Zero*. This speaks directly to the message the 17th ICASA International Steering Committee seeks to promote and is derived from the UNAIDS vision of striving for: "Zero new HIV and TB infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related and TB deaths".

The conference will be chaired by Professor Robert Soudre, the President of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) and co-chaired by Professor Ian Sanne, the CEO of Right Care and Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand.

"By drawing the world's attention to HIV in Africa, where the progress made since the International AIDS Conference in Durban in 2000 is threatened by the global economic downturn, this ICASA is an opportunity to renew the global commitment by donors, private sector, community leaders, media and academia" says Co-chair Professor Ian Sanne.

"Our continent is at a crossroads, this is the time for efficiency, innovation and pragmatic approaches to tackle the issues surrounding HIV. About 10 000 of the world's leading scientists, policy makers, activists, government and civil society leaders are expected to join the debate," says Professor Robert Soudre Conference Chairperson.

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), the custodian of ICASA, and Dira Sengwe, the custodians of the South African AIDS Conferences supported by the Foundation for Professional Development (FPD), are the lead organizers of the 17th ICASA in Cape Town.

To register for the conference visit www.icasa2013southafrica.org.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Dira Sengwe

Dira Sengwe is a South African-based non-Governmental Organisation established in 2002 by the members of the local organising committee of the ground-breaking XIIIth International Aids Conference, Durban, 2000. The organisation emerged at a critical period in the history of the struggle for recognition of HIV and AIDS as a disease, overwhelmingly in poor countries, especially on the African continent. The organisation was established in response to the slow uptake of AIDS treatment in South Africa and established the South African Aids Conference which is organised bi-annually since 2003 as a platform to promote a unified AIDS response. Other Dira Sengwe projects include the AIDS Bravery Award and an Oral History Project. For more information on Dira Sengwe please visit www.dirasengwe.org.

About The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA)

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), the custodian of ICASA was founded in 1989 at the fourth International Symposium on AIDS and Associated Cancers in Africa (now ICASA) held in Marseille, France by a group of African scientists, activists and advocates in response to this epidemic. SAA envisions and African continent free of HIV, TB and malaria and their debilitating effects on communal and societal structures, where people are socially and economically empowered to live product lives in dignity. For more information on SAA please visit www.saafrica.org.

About The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD)

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) is a South African Private Institution of Higher Education dedicated to building a better society through education and capacity development. FPD annually provides management and clinical training to 30 000 health care professionals and managers across Africa and has support the initiation on ART of more than 200 000 PLHIV. FPD also organises national and international conferences as a conduit to shape public and policy perspectives. FPD's involvement in conferences dates back to the Durban in 2000 conference where it provided the conference secretariat. For more information please visit www.foundation.co.za.

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