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**High profile speakers invited to attend 17th ICASA
Africa's largest AIDS Conference comes to South Africa in December**

Current and former heads of state across Africa, top leadership from a broad range of UN agencies and cutting edge researchers from around the world will deliver keynote presentations ranging from accountability across sectors to antiretroviral treatments, from new preventions to an update on a cure.

The International Steering Committee (ISC) has finalized the plenary sessions for the 17th International Conference on AIDS and STI's in Africa (ICASA 2013), Africa's largest AIDS Conference, being held in Cape Town, South Africa from 7 – 11 December 2013.

ICASA is held every two years, so this year's event will be the last before 2015, the target date for the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). ICASA will be important milestone in assessing the achievements made and the challenges ahead. The theme for this ICASA is *Now More than Ever: Targeting Zero*, derived from the UNAIDS vision of striving for: "Zero new HIV and TB infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related and TB deaths. This vision guided the ISC in its choice of plenary topics and speakers as well as speakers for the Opening and Closing Sessions."

Among the topics to be addressed include Shared Responsibility and Mutual Accountability, ART: A Sustained Approach and the Elimination of Mother to Child Transmissions (MTCT). The role of communities, how HIV and AIDS affects adolescents and young people and the impact of tuberculosis will also be discussed.

The conference is 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.

"Preparations for this important conference are progressing well and the ISC is confident that we are on track to provide an in-depth, meaningful and memorable conference experience to all delegates," says Prof Ian Sanne, ICASA co-chair, citing that registrations are coming in steadily.

And a host of exhibitors have already been signed to attend.

In addition to invited sessions, a number of sessions will be based on abstract submissions. Researchers across Africa are invited to submit their abstracts online via the conference website before the 20 June 2013 deadline.

To register for the conference visit www.icasa2-13southafrica.org
Follow us on Twitter @icasaconference or on Facebook at icasaconference2013

Ends

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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