

The Node *... where a leaf arises from a stem*



The Node is a bilingual publication dedicated to global HIV/AIDS issues by Red Ribbon Centre, the UNAIDS Collaborating Centre for Technical Support



Vienna, Austria 22 July 2010

Press Statement

Public health leaders push ambitious agenda to stop TB deaths among people living with HIV

22 July 2010 - Vienna, Austria - It's a story that unfolds every day around the world but is rarely heard. A woman, man or child living with HIV gets exposed to tuberculosis (TB) in a setting where there are no measures to stop the spread of infection. It could be a workplace, a prison, a clinic or even at home. Soon the person is sick - coughing, feverish and weak.

This story is being told and retold this week among the 20 000 participants gathered for the 2010 International AIDS Conference. It's a story that can end well if the person is lucky enough to have access to both antiretroviral and TB treatment. But too often there is a fatal finish. Without proper treatment about nine out of 10 people living with HIV who become ill with active TB will die within two to three months.

The dual epidemic has fanned across Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe and affects women, men and children

from every walk of life. One in four deaths among people with HIV is linked to TB - that's about half a million people who die unnecessarily each year.

"Every three minutes a person living with HIV has his or her life cut off prematurely by TB. This is completely unacceptable, because TB is a preventable and curable disease," said Dr Jorge Sampaio, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Stop TB.

Global public health leaders gathered at this conference have committed to an ambitious new agenda to stop these preventable deaths. Dr Sampaio presided today over the signing of a landmark document: a memorandum of understanding between the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Stop TB Partnership. The agreement binds the two organizations together in a common goal: to strive towards halving the number of people living with HIV

who die from TB by 2015, compared to 2004 levels. Provision of life-saving antiretroviral treatment for all TB patients living with HIV is another key objective.

“We already have the tools to keep people living with HIV from dying of TB”, said Mr Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, “We must join our TB partners to promote an evidence and human rights based approach to tackling TB and HIV. Together we can virtually eliminate TB related AIDS deaths.”

Stop TB and UNAIDS will press government health programmes to reach all people in need of care for TB/HIV by integrating the services that provide diagnosis and treatment for both conditions; and also seek to increase the resources needed to accomplish this goal. Another overarching objective is to galvanize civil society organizations, communities affected by TB and HIV and the private sector to form strong partnerships aimed at jointly addressing TB/HIV.

2 In keeping with the focus of this year's AIDS conference, the signers stressed the needs of marginalized groups. "We call on the world's leaders to promote full access to HIV and TB services for women and girls, orphans, displaced persons, migrants, prisoners, men who have sex with men, people who use drugs other vulnerable groups," said Dr Marcos Espinal, Executive Secretary of the Stop TB Partnership.

During 2010 and 2011 the leadership of Stop TB and UNAIDS will make at least two joint visits to countries heavily affected by TB/HIV per year and promote their new initiative at least one international event per year.

Contact:

Stop TB Partnership | Judith Mandelbaum-Schmid | tel. +41 79 254 6835 | schmidj@who.int

UNAIDS Geneva | Saya Oka | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | okas@unaids.org

Note to editors

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.

The Stop TB Partnership is a leading public-private global health partnership, established in 2001, with the aim of eliminating tuberculosis (TB), as a public health problem and, ultimately, to obtain a world free of TB. It comprises a network of more than 1200 international organizations, countries, donors from the public and private sectors, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and individuals that have expressed an interest in working together to achieve this goal. Find out more at www.stoptb.org.



XVIII International AIDS Conference

**Ms. CHU Lai-wah Nursing Officer
Red Ribbon Centre, Department of Health**

Vienna, a place that evokes imagery of music and arts, is where XVIII International AIDS Conference is held. One might want to ask, is there any link between AIDS and music and arts? In fact, Vienna is geographically adjacent to Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the AIDS epidemic is becoming a serious problem due

to intravenous drug use, moreover, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is also located in Vienna, therefore, I think this is probably one of the reasons why Vienna was chosen to be the venue for this year's International AIDS Conference.

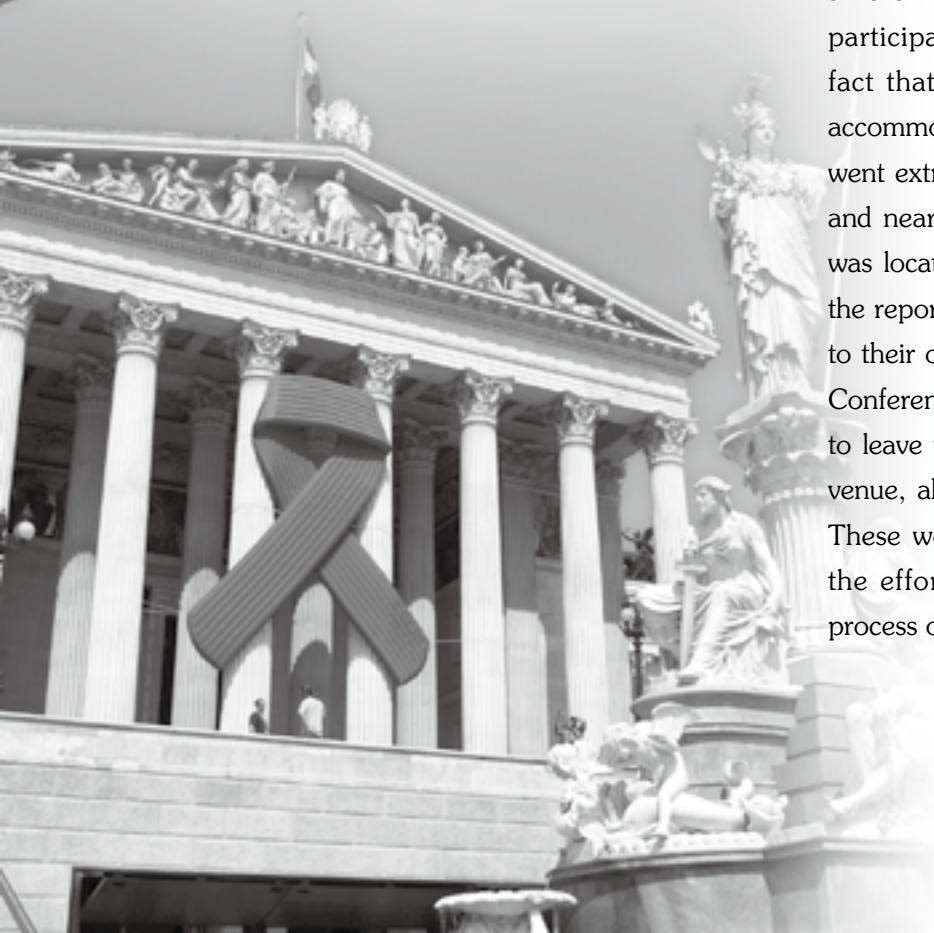


As soon as I set foot on Vienna, I could immediately feel the efforts this City had exerted for this Conference, the local people hoisted a huge red ribbon on to the National Parliament Building, and in the City Hall, there were also AIDS-related campaign publicity materials printed on many public transport facilities and roadside billboards. On the night before the start of the Conference, a “Life Ball” was held in the City Hall, much akin to the atmosphere of a Carnival. Apart from the widely famed concert performance, there were even float parade, and beautiful fairy girls handing out condoms on the spot; many local citizens were out wearing Halloween masks to distribute AIDS publicity leaflets. In the evening of the third day of

the Conference there was a large scale march with approximately a thousand people taking part, they demanded for winning equal treatment, gaining access to medication, being accorded with human rights, and so on by shouting slogans, singing, dancing, waving banners and so forth, there were even groups of people holding paper coffins demanding TB medications for AIDS patients. The place was well ordered, and the atmosphere was a peaceful one, giving the impression of having fully embodied such Conference themes as “zero discrimination” and “full acceptance”.

3

This year’s Conference was held from 18th to 23rd July, the main theme was “Rights Here, Right Now”, a total of 19,300 delegates from 197 countries participated in this year’s Conference. Despite the fact that there was a large number of participants, accommodation, catering, transportation arrangements went extremely smooth with the help of the organisers and nearly 770 friendly volunteers. The media centre was located at the venue for the Conference, allowing the reporters to send back the latest news on the venue to their own countries and regions in the first instance. Conference delegates requiring childcare were also able to leave their children to the care of the crèche at the venue, allowing them to concentrate on the meetings. These well-planned arrangements have demonstrated the efforts committed by the organisers during the process of planning for this International Conference.





giving a light hug as a show of support and care for them was very important to them. Moreover, it was also a good demonstration to people that HIV would not be transmitted through hugging.

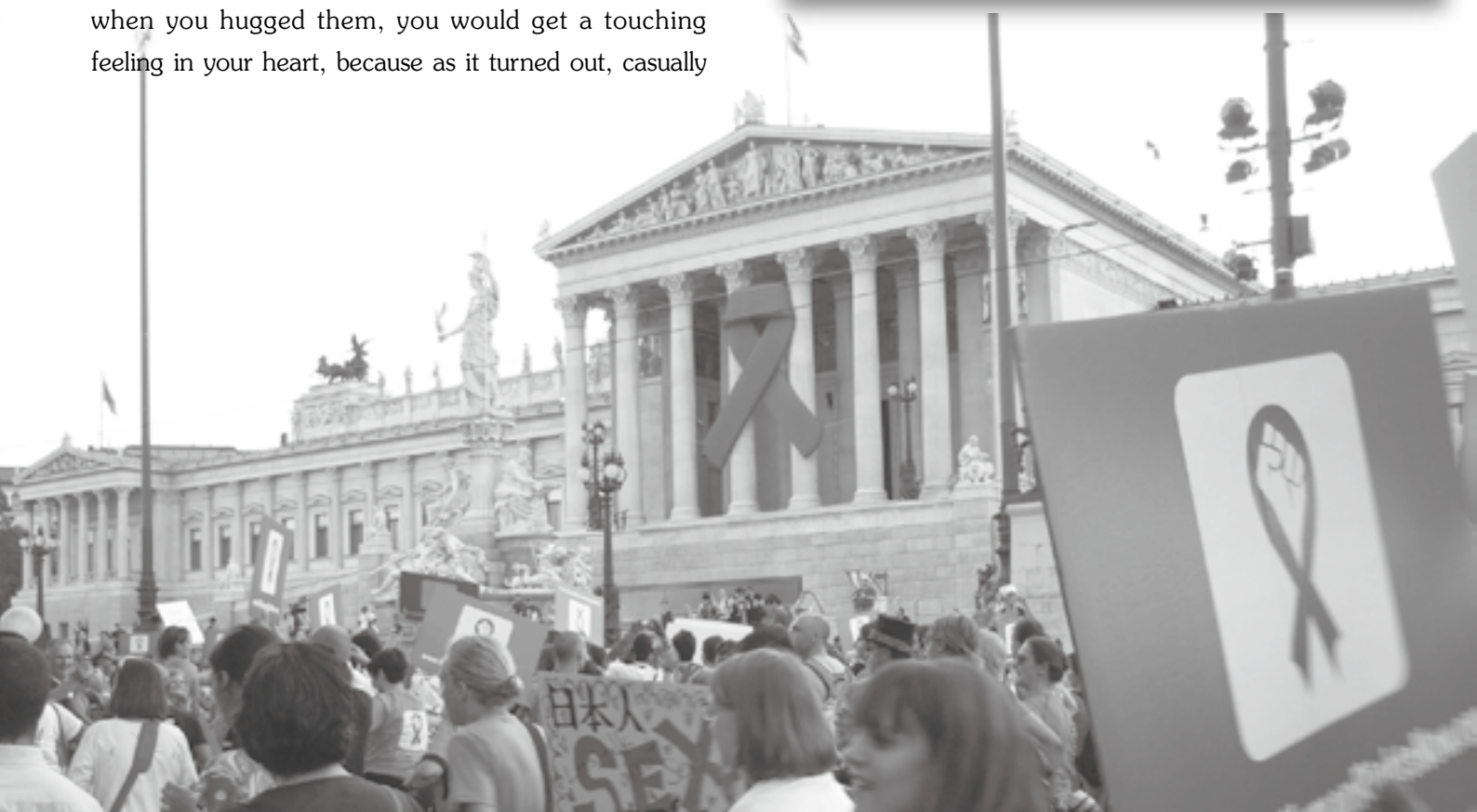
Various organisations in the Global Village used different means to disseminate information about AIDS, like hosting discussions, dancing, singing, and chatting, there were even some women from African countries combing hair for Conference delegates, during the process they would talk to each other about the matters related to AIDS in their own countries, and these African women all came from very impoverished families, they hadn't even been on a plane before but through the opportunity afforded by the Conference

Apart from the topical speeches, there were various discussions related to strategies for the prevention and treatment of AIDS everyday in the meeting venue, the format of these could only be likened as all-inclusive: some were staged as workshops, others were small group meetings, and in the satellite meetings, many interesting reports were presented. For example, whether the risk of infection with the HIV virus could be reduced after circumcision was performed on male subjects or, whether or not female frequently washing the genital could increase the chance of HIV infection, and so on and so forth.

4



However, the spot I liked most was the Global Village where unexpected events could frequently be experienced. Some HIV-infected people or their relatives would suddenly appear to ask for a "free hug", when you hugged them, you would get a touching feeling in your heart, because as it turned out, casually





on this occasion they became like AIDS ambassadors, sharing their experience with other people, and of course, they could also share their experience in this Conference when they went back to their home countries.

During some of the proceedings of the Conference, there were protesters held banners in the meeting venues, shouting their slogans aloud, and the delegates handled the situations calmly, listening to their views, then allowed them to leave slowly, and the meeting proceedings would be resumed. I think this is the attitude that accords respect to others expressing their views and is highly recommended for other people to follow.

The most striking impression I had during this Conference was how the young people strived to win rights for themselves. Their slogan was "Involve young people! Now make it happen!", they proposed providing sex education and increasing funding for young people to undertake AIDS prevention projects, and that funding must be sustained, and the demand was made for certain decision-making levels to have youth participation. They also staged Conference of their own, where they held negotiations with senior officials from UN organisations about the AIDS projects, they could handle the affairs appropriately with clear and concise themes, well-defined and attainable goals. In addition, they had made use of the activities most liked by young people, for instance, photography,



painting and drawing, singing, dancing, etc, to spread the information on AIDS prevention amongst their peers. The manner in which they were conducting their affairs, a little childlike but also rather well-adjusted, serious yet also feeling relax, was something that we should really sincerely learn from.

During this Conference I could personally hear the address given by former US President Mr. Clinton which had given me much joy and delight. Despite the fact that he was not an AIDS expert, he could elucidate the crux of the problems in solving the AIDS epidemic,



and to explain the importance of distributing medicines and wealth as that relate to HIV/AIDS prevention. He explained that as long as everybody exerting a little effort, controlling HIV/AIDS will most certainly succeed. His words were very persuasive, in an instant, he became my idol figure.

In reality, detailed planning and good organisation are essential elements for a successful conference; of more importance is the supports of government and the citizens before it can achieve maximum resounding effects. In my opinion, the XVIII International AIDS Conference is a success, and I would look forward for “Rights here, Right Now” making its headway in Hong Kong.



Lions Red Ribbon Fellows 2010

**Mr. HO Hoi-lam, Ken Liaison Officer
Red Ribbon Centre, Department of Health**

Lions Red Ribbon Fellows 2010 started off with the visit of first two fellows in September. The two fellows are Dr. SUN Yong-he from the Taishan district Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Taian City, Shan Dong Province and Dr. YE Shu-jun from the Guangxi Hezhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

During their 12-day visit (6-17 September 2010), they have visited Red Ribbon Centre, Integrated Treatment Centre in Kowloon Bay and the AIDS Counselling and Testing Service of the Special Preventive Programme, Department of Health. They have also visited a Social Hygiene Clinic and other non-governmental

organizations, e.g. AIDS Concern (Office, outreach service and Mongkok testing center), Zi Teng, St. John’s Cathedral HIV Education Centre, C.H.O.I.C.E., Hong Kong AIDS Foundation and The Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong. Visits to Chairman of Advisory Council on AIDS Prof CHEN Char-nie, Chairman of Red Ribbon Centre Management Advisory Committee Dr. YU Chung-toi, Samuel and Office of Lions Clubs International District 303 H.K. & Macau were scheduled.

The rest of the Red Ribbon Fellows are going to visit Hong Kong in turns between October and December.