

June 30, 2005

The Seventh International Congress
on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific

**The Seventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific
2,400 Participants from 45 Countries
– Outlook for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment in Asia and the Pacific –**

The Seventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (7th ICAAP), a major conference to facilitate international cooperation on prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS, will take place at the International Conference Center Kobe (ICCK) in Kobe, Japan from July 1 to 5.

Under the main theme “Bridging Science and Community,” the congress will work to foster a sense of solidarity in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Asia-Pacific region and encourage the Japanese government to increase its efforts in this field.

Participants will include HIV-positive individuals, NGOs, community representatives, policymakers and medical experts. They will share their knowledge of daily prevention, care and treatment and their experience in establishing community networks. This goes beyond the mere exchange of professional knowledge and expertise in the medical and academic fields and will enhance the region’s ability to cope with the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Asia and the Pacific. As of June 20, approximately 2,400 people, including journalists, from 45 countries, had registered to attend the congress, which is gaining considerable attention as Japan’s first congress on HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific.

The opening ceremony will be held from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Portopia Hall on July 1. Following a welcome message by Prof. Tadimitsu Kishimoto, the chair of the 7th ICAAP Organizing Committee, Dr. Peter Piot (Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and Under Secretary-General of the United Nations) and Prof. Dennis Altman (President, AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific) will address the congress. Minister of Health, Labor, and Welfare Hidehisa Otsuji and Kobe Mayor Tatsuro Yada will be the guest speakers at this event.

The emcees will be Mr. Hiroshi Hasegawa, of the Japanese Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, and Ms. Chizuko Ikegami, of the NGO PLACE Tokyo, both of whom have firsthand knowledge of the difficulty in treating and preventing HIV/AIDS in Japan.

The opening ceremony will include a Japanese flute (*shakuhachi*) performance by Dr. Masuo Kishimoto (National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Department of Virology 1st, Laboratory of Rickettsia and Chlamydia) and a video message from Hong Kong movie star Jackie Chan.

Each day, under the main theme “Bridging Science and Community,” the congress will feature a plenary session, which will be composed of 12 topics, followed by symposia organized under a variety of sessions. A total of 22 sessions will cover 88 topics, such as countermeasures for HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, cross-border strategies, prevention, care and treatment within communities and pressing challenges.

There will be 45 oral sessions (10-minute presentations followed by five-minute discussions) on 270 topics. The sessions will be held under the six broad themes of “Basic and Clinical Sciences,” “Treatment, Care and Support,” “Prevention and Epidemiology,” “Culture, Gender and Sexual Issues” and “Political and Social Contexts.” There will also be displays of some 1,400 posters.

Skills-building workshops will provide opportunities to improve various skills that participants can apply to their daily work, such as practical techniques for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, skills for effective running of community programs and advice for NGOs on working with governments.

Dr. Peter Piot will discuss the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Asia and the Pacific on July 1, and a WHO representative will give an interim report on the 3-by-5 Initiative on July 4.

Many cultural events, such as performance and movies, will be open to the public. Some events, such as an AIDS Walk, will be sponsored by Hyogo Prefecture.

Infections have gradually increased in Japan, rising to 1,165 reported cases in 2004, the first time the number exceeded 1,000. It can be stated that the epidemic is on the rise in Japan and can no longer be ignored. It is highly significant for Japan to host the 7th

ICAAP as the first-hand experiences of developing countries in their fight against HIV/AIDS will help the country to formulate better HIV/AIDS countermeasures.

This year, countries will report on how they have fulfilled targets set by the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) in 2001. In addition, results will be announced for WHO and UNAIDS' 3-by-5 Initiative (to provide antiretroviral therapy for three million people living in low- or middle-income countries by the end of 2005). Meanwhile, the interim report on the UN's Millennium Development Goals will be issued. Expectations are high that the 7th ICAAP will promote further initiatives for prevention, care and treatment in this landmark year.

For further details please contact:

7th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific
PR Committee
Media Center (July 1st – July 5th)
TEL +81-78-302-2564
Kobe Portopia Hotel
Room *Tsutsuji*
Media7icaap@webershandwick.com