

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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Building the Case for Political and Financial Action on Universal Access

On 18 March, the IAS launched its *Universal Access Now* advocacy campaign with a targeted effort to generate letters to world leaders urging them to reinvigorate the drive for universal access with renewed financial and political commitments. The IAS also released two major policy papers in conjunction with the launch to help inform discussion throughout 2010, particularly at the first of two Global Fund replenishment meetings held at the end of the March in The Hague, Netherlands. The two reports are available in the online [action centre](#).

The IAS campaign is focused on the Global Fund replenishment process and the G8 and G20 Summits in late June because they will be critical to reaching the 2005 commitment to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. That commitment began with the G8 Communiqué at Gleneagles

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and was confirmed by all UN Member States three months later – an extraordinarily clear and definitive statement of collective will by the international community in the face of an expanding global health crisis.

The deadline is almost here and enormous progress has been made. Millions of lives have been saved, millions more have been placed on life-saving treatment, and health outcomes and life expectancy are improving in many high-burden countries. Yet, the goal of universal access is still distant, and for every two people placed on antiretroviral therapy (ART), five more are infected.

“It is at once exhilarating and tremendously frustrating to be at this crossroads,” said Dr. Julio Montaner, IAS President and Director of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. “We can see the impact of scale-up in the number of lives saved and are poised to make huge strides in the next few years if we have the resources and commitment the epidemic demands and that world leaders promised.”

Many civil society representatives emerged from the March Global Fund [replenishment meeting](#) troubled by the discussion. Despite evidence of the remarkable impact that Global Fund-financed programmes are having on preventing and treating HIV, tuberculosis and malaria and improving health outcomes for millions, officials representing donor nations at the meeting sent worrying signals about their ability to scale up financial contributions in the current fiscal climate.

The most ambitious funding scenario developed by the Global Fund Secretariat is \$20 billion for 2011–2013; this level of funding would maintain existing well-performing grants, while providing the capacity to expand to meet the expected need for additional quality programmes during this period. Although ambitious, the funding level is not unrealistic.

“At the end of the day it is a question of political priorities, and it seems inconceivable that the same countries that have poured trillions of dollars into mismanaged financial institutions are balking at the comparatively modest funding required to save millions of lives in the world’s poorest nations,” said Robin Gorna, IAS Executive Director.

Canada – the host of June’s G8 and G20 Summits – announced in its March 2010 budget that it would cut CDN\$4.5 billion in overseas development assistance over the next five years to help reduce its deficit. It is important to note that Canada had a relatively mild recession and has come out of its recession ahead of all other G7 nations (the G8 nations minus Russia), posting GDP growth of 6.2% in the first quarter of 2010. Canada is also one of the few countries publicly opposed to the proposed Financial Transaction Tax: a tiny tax of only .05% on global financial transactions that could raise over \$350 billion per year to support a wide range of health, development and environmental goals.

AIDS 2010 Update

President Bill Clinton and South African Health Minister Motsoaledi to Speak

President Bill Clinton, founder of the William J. Clinton Foundation and 42nd President of the United States, and South African Health Minister Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi will be among the high-level speakers to address AIDS 2010 delegates.

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As host country, Canada sets the agenda for the summits, so attention is now focused on the upcoming G8 Summit (25–26 June) in Muskoka and G20 Summit (26–27 June) in Toronto to ensure that these meetings of the world’s wealthiest nations reaffirm their 2005 commitment to universal access and pledge the financial resources and innovative fiscal policies needed to achieve it.

To that end, the IAS is collaborating with other civil society groups, meeting with G8 health experts and Sherpas, providing input on G8 research reports, and supporting advocacy by the IAS membership, Governing Council and other allies around the world in advance of the summits. As part of those efforts, the IAS developed an e-advocacy letter-writing campaign that allows individuals to send standard or personalized letters to individual (or all) G20 leaders, as well as the African Union and European Union Chairs, urging them to assert their leadership to help end the epidemic.

If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to review the campaign resources and send your letters; share these links with colleagues and friends, and post your thoughts about the campaign on the new IAS Stronger Together blog. Make your voice count in the call for Universal Access Now.

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