



International Indigenous AIDS Conference Opens for AIDS 2016 in South Africa

International Indigenous AIDS Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS

Durban, SA (May 24, 2016) – The International Indigenous Working Group on HIV & AIDS (IIWGHA) announces it will host the 6th International Indigenous Pre-conference on HIV & AIDS called *Reclaiming Indigenous Voices: Our Lives, Our Health, Our Future in Durban* right before the International AIDS Conference at Umhlanga Ridge, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa on July 16-17, 2016.

IIPCHA Expected Guests/Speakers:

- Honourable Canadian Minister of Health, Jane Philpott
- Provincial Minister of Health KwaZulu-Natal, Dr. Sibongiseni Maxwell Dhlomo
- Mayor of Durban, James Nxumalo
- Deputy Executive Director of UN AIDS, Dr. Luiz Loures

This AIDS 2016 affiliated pre-conference highlights Indigenous peoples from Southern Africa to explore *Indigeneity in Africa* and HIV in their communities. It is an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to share wise and promising practices, learn from each other and build relationships across continents, cultures, traditions, and languages.

Canada, America, Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Australia, and New Zealand are countries represented by IIWGHA. They all have a history of colonization and are now rediscovering their traditions to value a collaborative, culturally appropriate response to HIV and AIDS. Responses that incorporate traditional healing, medicines, ceremonies and holistic practices alongside scientific medicines.

"South Africa is an important host country because it is experiencing the biggest HIV epidemic in the world with an estimated 6.19 million people living with HIV," said Ken Clement, IIWGHA Co-Chair Canada. "And as in many of the countries represented by IIWGHA, South Africa's Indigenous population is over-represented."

Added Marama Pala, IIWGHA Co-Chair New Zealand, "We have first-hand understanding of the importance of the Indigenous connection to a traditional land base, displacement from that land, and how laws displacing Indigenous people result in them being left behind."

Indigenous people living with HIV and AIDS, service providers, researchers, policy-makers, funders, and community leaders from all over the world, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous will come together in Durban, South Africa to celebrate, strategize and network on an Indigenous-led response to HIV AIDS.

For more information or to register, visit: www.aids2016community.org/tag/iiwgha



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About IIWGHA iiwgha.org

For over two decades Indigenous peoples and leaders around the world have worked together to form the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV & AIDS to build a unified voice for Indigenous peoples in collective action against HIV and AIDS by creating partnerships with governments, Indigenous leaders, research bodies, and AIDS organizations. IIWGHA provides Indigenous leaders an outlet for sharing, exchanging, and gaining experiences and knowledge on HIV and AIDS to promote hope and change within their own communities.

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