Françoise Barré-Sinoussi Becomes President of the International AIDS Society

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During the closing ceremony of the 2012 International AIDS conference on July 27, Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, 2008 Nobel laureate in medicine, became the new President of the International AIDS Society for a two year term lasting until the next International AIDS conference which will be held in Melbourne, Australia, in 2014.

Dr. Barré-Sinoussi joined the Pasteur Institute in Paris in the early 1970s. She received her PhD in 1974 and interned at the U.S. National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD before returning to the Pasteur Institute. Her research quickly turned to a particular group of viruses, the retroviruses. Her knowledge in this field led her to discover HIV in 1983. This discovery revealed an urgent need for diagnostic tests to aid in controlling the spread of the disease. Barré-Sinoussi started her own laboratory at the Pasteur Institute in 1988.

She has co-authored over 240 scientific publications, has participated in over 250 international conferences, and has trained many young researchers. Dr. Barré-Sinoussi has actively contributed to several scientific societies and committees at the Institut Pasteur as well as to other AIDS organizations, such as the National Agency for AIDS Research and the International AIDS Society in France. She has also been implicated at an international level, notably as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the UNAIDS-HIV.

During her visit to Washington planned around the International AIDS Conference, Dr. Barré-Sinoussi highlighted the progress and challenges of the fight against the epidemic. Describing herself as a "socially committed scientist", Dr. Barré-Sinoussi has visited countries from every continent that have particularly suffered from AIDS. Regarding the current situation, she believes that "despite the fantastic progress made in terms of treatment and prevention, it is important to remember that this virus does not have boundaries. This virus will come back and could come back under other forms and if patients stop treatment they can develop resistance to treatment". Stressing the importance of international collaboration and relationships with patients, she applauded the new global scientific strategy signed between France (ANRS/Sidaction) and the United States (NIH/Treatment Action Group) at the conference. "Research has to be international, multidisciplinary, integrated with clinical study and produced in collaboration with a community of patients in order to evaluate treatment, but also with the private sector. Over the last two years, we have been seeing more financing and more and more projects meeting those criteria. We also want to inspire a new generation of researchers. This call for financing is also a call for new ideas, we want to work with creative minds and researchers that come from a different background than AIDS research."

Source: www.franceintheus.org

View a synopsis of Dr. Barré-Sinoussi's work: Biographical Sketch, Institut Pasteur