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## FIP PRESS RELEASE

### **Pharmacists against AIDS**

Working Group on AIDS and Drug Addiction

**'Equity, solidarity, gender and ethics – the four basic principles of the World Health Organisation can and must be applied in the fight against AIDS', said Dr. Fernando Antezana, Deputy Director-General of WHO, before the signing of a joint declaration between WHO and FIP defining the role of the pharmacist in the fight against AIDS. The Deputy Director-General is the highest ranking WHO official ever to attend a FIP Congress**

'I hope to see the pharmacist fully incorporated into the healthcare team', Dr. Antezana continued, 'but not only in one disease'. Dr. Antezana told participants that the work of WHO in the fight against HIV and AIDS had to revolve around the issues of prevention and advocacy. He highlighted the fact that more than 90% of the global population living with AIDS has no access to available treatments. 'The pharmacist is in contact with the community,' explained Antezana, 'in a position second only to the priest!' He urged pharmacists to use every opportunity to explain to and communicate with the general public, not necessarily only trying to sell a product.

Mr. Jean Parrot, FIP Vice President, and Chairman of the Working Group on AIDS and Drug Addiction explained that the Green Cross and Red Ribbon Association had begun with only a very few pharmacists working together to fight AIDS, and now there were more than 1500 pharmacists in France alone. He hoped that the association would grow and become international. To promote the association, participants at the symposium were all given a red scarf with a green cross on it.

Other speakers during a symposium on AIDS and Drug Addiction highlighted the need for youth involvement in the fight against AIDS.

Peter Rollason, a community pharmacist in Bullawayo, Zimbabwe said that the pharmacists' role had to be one of 'public health promotion, with information and education of young people to change their behaviour being a priority'. The results of Mr. Rollason's study were supported by the work of the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF), who highlighted their AIDS Awareness Project in which the young pharmacy students reach out to high school students on education and prevention issues.

'AIDS will kill more young people than the second world war,' predicted Dr. William Lowenstein of France, another speaker.

'This obviously has massive socio-economic implications,' he continued. 'However, AIDS does not hit at random and action against AIDS must be based on a humanistic philosophy'.

**For further information, please contact:**

**Peter Zethner-Moller, FIP Publications Manager  
Andries Bickerweg 5, 2517 JP The Hague, The Netherlands  
Tel: +31 70 363 1925 Fax: +31 70 365 90 47  
E-mail: p.zethner-moller@fip.nl**