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PRESS RELEASE

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AIDS 2018 CONFERENCE IN AMSTERDAM: MEETING THE 2030 GOALS WITH A NEW IMPETUS TO THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS

As the 22nd International Conference on HIV/AIDS begins today in Amsterdam, several warnings raise doubts about our ability to achieve, despite progress, control of the epidemic by 2030. The UNAIDS report¹ based on 2017 data points to an insufficient effectiveness of HIV/AIDS strategies, at multiple levels including discrimination and gender-based violence, as well as access to prevention and testing. In France, the HIV epidemic is not decreasing and new infections are increasing faster than new diagnoses. A significant increase in the number of chlamydia and gonococcal infections diagnoses has recently been reported by Santé Publique France, particularly among young people.² These data confirm the insufficiency of prevention and screening policies.³

Regarding current strategies, we urgently need to scale up the roll-out and continue to diversify prevention and testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Rapid-tests, self-tests⁴ and PrEP offers must be reinforced among key populations, most at risk.

In addition to these efforts, innovative strategies to fight the HIV epidemic need to be considered. Promoting screening of sexual partners of people with STIs by setting up partner notification services would help to break the chains of transmission.⁵ In addition, in the context of the French overseas territories, where the epidemic is particularly active, developing a global mobile prevention and screening offer⁶ would help to reach a significant portion of communities that remain far from healthcare. Supported by community-based projects, this approach must enable combo-testing of all STIs, and even other non-communicable diseases (high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.). In its conclusions issued a few days before the conference, an international commission composed of HIV/AIDS experts and stakeholders expressed the interest of such a de-siloed approach.⁷

Only at the cost of these efforts and innovations, involving all stakeholders (healthcare professionals, community based organizations, public authorities and funders) will the ambitious goals set for the fight against HIV/AIDS become achievable, including in France.

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¹ UNAIDS, *Miles to go - closing gaps, breaking barriers, righting injustices* (July 2018)

² Santé Publique France, *Estimations nationales et régionales du nombre de diagnostics d'infections à Chlamydia et à gonocoque en France en 2016* (July 2018)

³ CNS, *Avis suivi de recommandations sur la prévention et la prise en charge des IST chez les adolescents et les jeunes adultes* (February 2017)

⁴ CNS, *Avis suivi d'un rapport sur les autotests de dépistage de l'infection à VIH* (March 2013)

⁵ CNS, *Avis suivi de recommandations sur la notification formalisée aux partenaires* (February 2018)

⁶ CNS, *Avis et recommandations sur la prévention et la prise en charge des IST en Guyane et dans les Antilles françaises* (January 2018)

⁷ The International AIDS Society - Lancet Commission, *Advancing global health and strengthening the HIV response in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals* (July 2018)