

Jordi Casabona, Conference Co-Chair: Conference Closing Speech

In Geneva I was very impressed when Bernard Hirschel at the closing ceremony said "It has been easy, I learned a lot and I got a lot of help". Now, four years later, I can also say that I got a lot of help. I got a lot of help from the conference secretariat, local and international institutions, the co-organisers, from my family, from my collaborators at my workplace CEESCAT – who, by the way, have almost demonstrated that a group can be run without a director-, from the Track co-chairs and track members, as well as from many committed professionals, people living with AIDS and activists, without whom, of course this Conference would not exist. I thank you all very much. I also agree that both personally and professionally, I learned a lot. But easy, easy, I am not so sure, Bernard.

Within the Barcelona Framework we defined one principle:
"translating science into action" and four main objectives:

1. - to maintain the scientific level of the conference; 2.- to increase the links with the Latin American and Caribbean region; 3.- to highlight prevention; and, 4.- to highlight issues related to injecting drug use.

I do not intend to conduct an evaluation of the Conference here, but I think together we succeeded in reaching most of those objectives.

We have had many presentations from the Latin American and the Caribbean region, and that has helped to understand the breadth and depth work that is being done in some of these areas *.

Prevention has been present in this Conference * and a Global Mobilization for HIV Prevention initiative have been presented to increase global awareness and to mount comprehensive global effort.

Many presentations have demonstrated that prevention should remain a priority and that treatment and care can not be addressed separately from prevention. A part from consolidating the research agenda and advocacy strategies for preventive vaccines and microbicides, the effectiveness data presented on many interventions from very different scenarios, forces us expand and scale them up.

It has been shown clearly how social and economic disruption facilitates HIV transmission. We also need to put global development and human rights in the equation if we want preventive and therapeutic interventions to be effective and sustainable *.

In particular, I am very happy to acknowledge the number of presentations that we had on Injecting Drug Use. There has been an enormous amount of evidence showing that parenteral transmission is playing a crucial role in the dynamics of the epidemic not only in places like Spain, where this has been its traditional driving force, but also in many other developing and developed countries. Countries within our own European region, from both East Europe and some former soviet republics are good examples. There has been also a huge amount of evidence showing that preventive interventions targeted to IDUs work and are cheap. I think Spain is a good example of how harm reduction policies have been widely implemented, accepted and effective during the last years. It is difficult to understand harm reduction policies still being prohibited in many countries * and I hope this Conference has equipped those of you from those countries with the knowledge and the strategies you need to change these policies.

Although we agree that the global Fund initiative can help to push action, this Conference has also made clear that the resources mobilized so far are not enough. Reports presented and discussed here showed that we need 10 billions, that we could prevent 28 million infections and that 3 million persons on HAART can be a reachable objective for the next years. All that will require more energy, more partners and more committed reach countries.

Many people told me that in many sessions they could see an unusual transparency, a tone of constructive dialogue and advocating for working together. Moreover, the Conference structure

and the very active participation of political leaders have facilitated the creation and strengthening of networks across sectors

Overall, I think the Barcelona Conference has given a boost to programmatic and policy issues. It has created a consensus regarding the scale and the characteristics of the response needed now, as well as a sense of global partnership that should help to push for global effective responses. It is now so evident that it will be difficult to go backwards, in terms of research agenda, in terms of resource mobilization or in terms of alliances between public and private sectors. Let's use this opportunity.

As Goethe said a long time ago: "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do" ... and we must do it now!

Thank you very much it has been a pleasure to host you here.