

EMBARGOED UNTIL

Sunday, 21 October 2018; 10.00 CEST

DESMOND TUTU AWARD FOR HIV PREVENTION RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO BE PRESENTED TO LINDA-GAIL BEKKER AT HIV RESEARCH FOR PREVENTION (HIVR4P 2018)

(Madrid, Spain) -- The co-chairs of HIV Research for Prevention ([HIVR4P 2018](#)), the world's only scientific meeting dedicated exclusively to biomedical HIV prevention, have announced that the 2018 Desmond Tutu Award for HIV Prevention Research and Human Rights will be presented to HIV researcher, physician and community advocate Linda-Gail Bekker of Cape Town, South Africa. The presentation will take place at the Opening Plenary of this year's HIVR4P conference, Monday 22 October in Madrid, Spain.

Named in honor of South African cleric Desmond Tutu, one of the leading global advocates for HIV prevention and the dignity of all people, the award is presented every two years to an individual or organization that has worked in an outstanding manner to advance both HIV prevention research and the human rights of people affected by HIV.

"Linda-Gail Bekker is a tireless and innovative leader of efforts to ensure effective HIV prevention for all," said HIVR4P Co-chair Z Mike Chirenje of the University of Zimbabwe. "From her clinics in the impoverished Masiphumelele and New Crossroads townships of Cape Town, to her role as chief operating officer of the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation and in her capacity as immediate past president of the International AIDS Society, Linda-Gail's fearless advocacy and personalized models of care have saved lives and helped to break down barriers of stigma and discrimination in HIV prevention."

Bekker's famously user-friendly clinics offer models of services that engage and welcome all, including young people, especially young women and girls, men who have sex with men and others traditionally overlooked by healthcare systems. The mobile "Tutu Testers" she has championed bring voluntary HIV testing, counseling and information to communities throughout South Africa. Her clinics have been known to provide services such as babysitting and clothes washing to individuals who could not otherwise keep their appointments, and sports and computer literacy services for young people using their services.

At the same time Bekker, who is also professor of medicine at the University of Cape Town, has advanced efforts to integrate the diagnosis, treatment and care of HIV and tuberculosis, the leading global killer of people living with HIV. She has also co-led international research studies to develop innovative new HIV prevention methods including HIV vaccines, vaginal rings for HIV prevention and oral and injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Recently, Bekker used her position as international scientific chair of the [AIDS 2018](#) conference to speak on a global stage in support of increased financial and political support for HIV prevention research.

“Linda-Gail Bekker reminds us every day that the goals of stopping HIV and protecting the rights of everyone affected by the epidemic are inextricably linked,” said HIVR4P Co-chair Susan Buchbinder of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. “Her belief in the dignity of all people is the key to her effectiveness – whether she is holding political leaders to account in international policy-making forums or working one-on-one with patients in the clinic.”

Previous recipients of the Desmond Tutu Award for HIV Prevention and Human Rights include Archbishop Tutu himself, who received the award in 2014, and Ambassador Deborah Birx, Coordinator of the U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS and Director of the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, who was honored in 2016.

“I am both delighted and hugely honored to accept this award,” said Linda-Gail Bekker, “especially following in the footsteps of wonderful people like the Arch and Ambassador Birx. This award reminds us that, ultimately, all the work we do is to improve the lives and wellbeing of men, women and young people – fellow human beings everywhere – and that’s what really matters.”

About HIV Research for Prevention (HIVR4P 2018)

HIV Research for Prevention ([HIVR4P](#)) is the world’s only scientific meeting dedicated exclusively to biomedical HIV prevention, including vaccines, antibodies, microbicides, treatment as prevention, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and new forms of HIV prevention. Founded in 2014 and emerging from the previous AIDS vaccine and microbicide conferences, the biennial HIVR4P meeting responds to a growing consensus that effective HIV prevention requires a combination of approaches and close collaboration between fields of HIV prevention research. Conference funders include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, U.S. National Institutes of Health, Gilead, ViiV Healthcare, anRs (French Agency for Research on AIDS & Viral Hepatitis), Janssen, GSK, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Gobierno de Espana, Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovacion y Universidades, International Partnership for Microbicides, MSD, and the South African Medical Research Council.

The conference secretariat is the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise. In 2020, the International AIDS Society will assume the secretariat role for the conference.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of partners.

###

Contact: Mark Aurigemma
HIVR4P 2018 Media Manager
mark@aucomm.net
+1.646.270.9451