

Full text of the community address during the closing ceremony of 9th International AIDS Conference on HIV Science in Paris (IAS 2017), 26 July 2017.

Speaker: Othoman Mellouk, Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines Lead at the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC).

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is a scandal at this conference that we, as AIDS and hepatitis activists, feel compelled to speak out about.

Gilead Sciences is funding this conference and making a lot of positive public relations, while we all know that its pricing practices leave millions of people out of access to lifesaving treatment.



Gilead's prices for hepatitis C drugs are outrageously high. With their 1000 dollar pill they have wrecked government budgets and pushed patients in developed countries to run from country to country in their desperate bid to get hold of sofosbuvir.

They are charging \$32,000 in France, \$12,000 in Malaysia, \$4,500 in Brazil. In most countries these prices cannot be afforded either by people, nor by insurance schemes. And when a country like Ukraine tries to register a cheaper generic, they sue them for millions of dollars in private arbitration.

Gilead, presents itself as the responsible pharma company. The one that really cares. They give licenses, after all, to generic companies to supply drugs in the developing world.

But Gilead's licenses are not about access; they are about denial.

They exclude millions of patients in middle-income countries. These licenses are smokescreen that, in reality, create unfair monopolies where patents do not exist; and where Gilead has no rights. Licenses are also a diabolic strategy to control production of raw materials and strangle local independent generic manufacturers.

Leaving millions of patients without access to sofosbuvir was not enough for Gilead. Even as the licensed generics made their way into some developing countries, governments, doctors, hospitals, treatment providers and generic companies were asked to make lists of patients, to collect old empty bottles before giving the next one.

The violation of patient privacy was extraordinary; their greed insatiable. Gilead wants to count every dose sent out. Heaven forbid it falls into the "wrong hands" and saves a life in an excluded country.

The right to privacy be damned. Medical Ethics be damned. And certainly, patients desperate for sofosbuvir be damned!

Truvada - but let me ask you all to use the generic name - let's not become Gilead's brand ambassadors: tenofovir/emtricitabine has been approved as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

For the gay community, and other key populations too this is a life-saving development. For Gilead, it was an opportunity to file additional, evergreening patents and exploit our communities.

In several countries Gilead genuinely managed to abuse of the patent system seeking additional protection certificates beyond the legal duration of the TDF/FTC patent.

Today, in several countries including here in France, generic producers are ready to enter markets with more affordable versions of the drug that is urgently needed to scale up access to PrEP.

In a meeting yesterday with European activists Gilead alleged that they would likely block such generics and prevent millions of people from the effective prevention tool: PrEP.

Lastly, we have all been touched yesterday by the call of our colleague Jesus Aguais from Venezuela. During the conference, he met several pharmaceutical companies who committed to support the desperate people of Venezuela, except ONE company: Gilead didn't even dare to respond to his several requests to meet.

Gilead, Your true face is exposed today for all the world to see...

- Drop your prices and stop excluding people from middle-income countries from accessing lifesaving drugs.
- Stop blocking local manufacturing and registration of generics of sofosbuvir and tenofovir/emtricitabine.
- We urge you to respect the initial duration of the patent expiring now. Stop pressuring patent offices worldwide to obtain abusive patents like you shamefully did in India.

Gilead:

FREE THE CURE.

FREE THE PREP.

SUPPORT PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA !