

# Media Release

## 07.02.12

Royal  
Geographical  
Society

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning

## ● Global Health in the 21st Century: Preventing Pandemics and Fighting Disease

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**With greater international trade, travel and urbanisation, virus outbreaks and spreading diseases are becoming an increasing danger to global health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But how can society strike a balance between combating this threat at the same time as maintaining the hopes of eradicating established diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS?**

This question will be the focus of the latest in the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s flagship 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges discussion series.

Chaired by the BBC's medical correspondent Fergus Walsh, '*Global Health in the 21st Century*', will take place on Wednesday 7 March, 7.30pm, at the Society's London headquarters.

The speakers will be Dr W Ian Lipkin, Director of the Centre for Infection and Immunity at Columbia University USA, Dr Marie Charles, the founder of Global Medic Force, and Professor Peter Piot, Director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Commenting ahead of the event Dr Marie Charles, whose philanthropic organisation transfers clinical skills to healthcare workers in the developing world, said:  
"It is the seismic shift in much more insidious chronic diseases that is currently overwhelming the healthcare system in both the developing and developed world."

Dr Lipkin will talk about his experience from many years in the laboratory working with West Nile and SARS viruses. His advanced pathogen discovery methods have provided critical evidence in the fight to eradicate disease. He was recently used by the director Steven Soderbergh to advise on Hollywood film 'Contagion' with the aim of ensuring an accurate and realistic account of a pandemic.

Professor Piot brings vast experience to the discussion as the former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1995 to 2008. He was also a key figure on Project SIDA in Zaire, widely acknowledged as having provided the foundations of our understanding of HIV infection in Africa.

"The experience of the global response to AIDS demonstrates that a synergy of science, politics and programmes is essential for containing new and old epidemics," he said.

Tickets cost £7 for RGS-IBG members and £10 for non-members.

To book: call (0) 20 7591 3100, email: [events@rgs.org](mailto:events@rgs.org) or online [www.rgs.org/21cc](http://www.rgs.org/21cc)



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1. A limited number of free places are available for media. To register your interest, please contact our media office on [press@rgs.org](mailto:press@rgs.org) or 020 7591 3019. More information and biographies of all the speakers and chair is available on the website <http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org/challenges/adapting-to-an-urbanfuture/>
2. The event begins at 7.30pm (doors open at 6.30pm) on Wednesday 7 March, 2012 at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR. The nearest tube station is South Kensington.
3. For any journalists attending:
  - All guests are happy for their comments on the evening to be transcribed for press use
  - No filming or recording of the discussion is permitted
  - Images from the Society's official photographer will be available after the event for press purposes. No other photography will be permitted.
4. '21st Century Challenges' is a series of thought-provoking discussions aimed to improve public understanding of, and engagement with, some of the key issues likely to affect our lives and society in the future. More information, biographies, links, and videos of previous events are available at [www.21stcenturychallenges.org](http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org)
5. The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830, our Royal Charter of 1859 is for 'the advancement of geographical science'. Today, we deliver this objective by developing, supporting and promoting geography through research, expeditions and fieldwork, education, and public engagement, while also providing geographical input to policy. We aim to foster an understanding and informed enjoyment of our world. We hold the world's largest private geographical collection and provide public access to it. We have a thriving Fellowship and membership and offer the professional accreditation 'Chartered Geographer' [www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org)
6. Shell supports the Society's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenge series in promoting public discussion and understanding of some of the key issues facing society in the UK, and the world, in the coming decades.