

HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA ARE STILL EMERGENCIES

23RD SEPTEMBER 2011

A statement from the Communities Living with HIV, Tuberculosis and affected by Malaria
Delegation of the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

The Communities Living with HIV, Tuberculosis and affected by Malaria Delegation (Communities Delegation) of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) welcomes the report of the High-Level Independent Review Panel (HLP) and acknowledges the recommendations put forth in strengthening fiduciary controls and oversight mechanisms at all levels of the Global Fund, which are consistent with its values of transparency and accountability.

The comprehensive findings of the HLP is a result of six months of intensive work, and includes the review of 40 existing grants with a conclusion that all current weaknesses are opportunities that can be strengthened and improved. The Board of the Global Fund will meet on the 26th September 2011, in Geneva, Switzerland to review and discuss the findings and recommendations, act on the most urgent issues and agree on a process to address and action the recommendations.

The Communities Delegation is deeply concerned, however, on how some of the findings of the HLP can be misconstrued. The Global Fund has committed US\$ 22.4 billion in over 150 countries to support large-scale prevention, treatment, care and support programmes against the three diseases. This in practical terms translates to putting 3.2 million **people** on HIV treatment, treating 8.2 million **people** infected with Tuberculosis (TB), and 190 million bed-nets distributed to avert malaria infections. **Millions of lives have been saved**, because of the work of the Global Fund and its partners, and this needs to be put into perspective.

During times of a massive financial crisis and instability in the biggest world economies, major Global Fund contributors could translate the outcomes of the report into excuses not to meet funding commitments. The Global Fund needs the current and new donors to increase their contributions and pledges expressed at the Third Voluntary Replenishment Conference from US\$ 11 billion to more than US\$20 billion to ensure that efforts and gains made in the last decade can be effectively sustained. The Global Fund is thus far, the only mechanism in existence that could invest these resources needed in life-saving interventions. The report states, *“the failure of the Global Fund would be a global health catastrophe”*.

Currently, 15 million **people** living with HIV are in dire need to be on life-saving drugs; the case detection for TB globally is at 65%, with drug resistant TB spiralling faster; and malaria cases though contained might be at a risk of exploding if efforts are not preventive efforts are not sustained. These are all emergencies that require immediate attention and extraordinary actions so as to benefit the very communities that we stand up for.

The Communities Delegation does not support the HLP suggestions to re-evaluate the Board decision on Round 11 funding, and proposals for new eligibility criteria. The Board of the Global Fund needs to be able to discuss the impact, consequences and recommendations responsibly bearing in mind the tremendous ramifications these decision(s) will have on achieving MDGs 4, 5, and 6, and ultimately on the lives of communities.

Shared responsibility is at the core of partnerships, and the Global Fund is a unique funding mechanism and partnership with an oversight and governance structure that includes multi-stakeholder participation at both global and national level. The report provides a timely opportunity for both implementers and donors to not only make the money work, but also to demonstrate how it works.

We are dismayed with some disparaging and opportunistic public statements related to the leadership at the Global Fund Secretariat after the release of the HLP report, and would like to point out that the recent reappointment of the Executive Director proves the trust and confidence of the Board in his work. The Communities Delegation has confidence in the leadership of the Executive Director, and would like to express our most sincere gratitude to staff at the Global Fund Secretariat for their tireless commitment and dedication to ensuring that lives are being saved across the three diseases.

The Communities Delegation reiterates its position of zero tolerance to corruption and the commitment to transparency and accountability. We bring to the Global Fund Board the voices and needs of millions of people living with and affected by the three diseases, and together with the Civil Society Constituencies on the Board of the Global Fund, we will remain vigilant to ensure that the most urgent changes in the structures, policies and processes of the Global Fund are implemented in order to **continue saving lives**.

We call for the responsible use of the public information released in the HLP report by media and governments and other partners, with a reminder that the challenges related to the three disease is an on-going emergency in many parts of the world. We need to ensure that the recommendations of the Board, and its responses to these recommendations constantly place the lives of people at the centre of our discussions.

On behalf of the Communities Delegation,

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