

**gfan** report:

# 43<sup>rd</sup> Global Fund Board Meeting

May 2020

Virtual



## Introduction

The 43rd Board meeting was held virtually over two days this year. With sessions held in the days leading up to the meeting on a Community Rights and Gender update (CRG) and COVID-19. This report will highlight key details from the board meeting with a focus on a few key themes that were the focus of many of the discussions: COVID-19, Strategy Development, and CRG. Documents from the Board Meeting are available [here](#).

*Please note: It is impossible to capture the detailed level of rich, complex and nuanced discussions that took place and developed throughout the week. This summary represents the GFAN Secretariat's experience and interpretation of the meeting and should not be considered an official or authorized accounting of events and positioning.*

- **GFAN's [Global Fund Board Guide](#): Includes more detailed information on the process of board meetings and the work of delegations.**
- **Documents for the [Global Fund's 43rd Board Meeting](#)**
- **Developing Country [Delegation Board Meeting Statement](#)**

Box 1: Where to find More Information

## Pre-Board Sessions

Key documents: [CRG Report](#)

### CRG:

The 1.5-hour session offered presentations from the Global Fund Secretariat and an opportunity for discussion and questions from board members.

Key questions asked and statements made during this session included:

- » How do we manage lack of political will? (a: slow work but making progress)
- » We need to have greater and more strategic use of data, and scale up investments in human rights, gender, communities, and key populations in the next cycle of grant. Critical to start with investment in data.
- » Concerns were expressed on whether investment in this intervention is meeting the verbal commitment. Specifically, concerns were expressed that scope of funding for Community Led Monitoring (CLM) is too small, and that increased investment is needed now to scale up and expand CLM because its value is well established, but the scope remains limited.

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## COVID-19:

The 2-hour discussion included a presentation from the Global Fund Secretariat and a short appearance by Dr. Tedros, the ED of the WHO.

Key questions asked and statements made during this session included:

- » The indirect effects of COVID are likely to be more lethal than the virus itself. As countries face serious disruptions to their health systems, we are going to require some bold responses and we will need to take governments out of their comfort zone.
- » CRG department will be part of the review of COVID-19 funding programs. We need to make sure COVID 19 is not used as a way to exclude people from healthcare.

**“Antidote to this is national and global solidarity, cracks at national and global levels will be exploited by the virus.”**

**~ Dr. Tedros, WHO**

Box 2: Quote from Dr. Tedros, Executive Director of the World Health Organization

### Technical Partner Modelling on COVID-19:

- UNAIDS: [The cost of inaction](#)
- STOP-TB: [The Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Response on Tuberculosis in High Burden Countries](#)
- RBM Partnership to End Malaria: [Impacts of COVID-19 on the delivery of essential malaria services in Africa](#)

Box 3: Technical Partner Modelling on COVID-19

## Day One:

*Agenda items: Update from the Executive Director, COVID-19 Response & Business Continuity, Update from the Technical Review Panel, and Office of the Inspector General Annual Report.*

## Update from the Executive Director:

### COVID-19:

The Global Fund's main focus during this pandemic:

1. Keep people safe
2. Manage risks to mission
3. Help countries plan and respond

The world has changed irrevocably due to COVID-19 and the impact will be much bigger than the 2008 economic crisis as it will reshape health, finances, and economics. The next replenishment will happen, best case, when we are spending billions on rolling out a vaccine for COVID-19. If we want to sustain global support for AIDS, TB and malaria (ATM), the Global Fund cannot stay in a box and say leave our money alone; we have to demonstrate this is all the same fight – a fight against one infections disease is a fight against them all. We still must win the fight against AIDS, TB, and Malaria but also pathogens left unseen and **overall leave no one behind.**

Other key points made during the update from the ED, Peter Sands:

- » It is premature to debate what the Global Fund Role is post COVID-19.
- » The concept of global health security needs to protect everyone.
- » The Global Fund was the answer to the last big pandemic to strike humanity and because our fight is still unfinished, we offer a unique perspective to the fight against COVID-19.
- » Peter Sands' biggest nightmare is that we get knocked off track on the fight against AIDS, TB, and Malaria and then we get handed the other unfinished fight – COVID-19, but with not enough ammunition to really win any of the fights.
- » The Global Fund needs to engage in the COVID-19 fight and think broadly and differently about how it impacts AIDS, TB and Malaria.
- » The Global Fund is one of humanity's greatest creations - a powerful, effective tool to transform solidarity into saved lives - we need to finish the work of AIDS, TB and Malaria but we also need to recognize that COVID-19 has and will change everything.

**“The Global Fund is one of humanity’s greatest creations a powerful, effective tool to transform solidarity into saved lives - we need to finish the work of AIDS TB and Malaria but we also need to recognize that COVID has/will change everything.”**

**~ Peter Sands, ED of the Global Fund**

Box 4: Quote from Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund

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## Strategy Development:

- » Plans are completely changed for the strategy development. The Partnership Forums may not be in person and the Board leadership retreat, which was supposed to kick off the strategy development did not happen.
- » There is much to discuss, and the Global Fund will need to be creative, but it will not be the same and it will not be ideal.
- » Although the Fund will do its best to be as inclusive as possible, it will not be the same without in person meetings. This means it will be more challenging to consider multiple perspectives and have a robust debate.

## CRG:

- » COVID-19 should not be used to trample on human rights.
- » On the Global Fund's monitoring tool for key populations, they have been reinforcing message to CCM's that key populations must be included with COVID-19 funding.

## Other Key points:

- » The Global Fund has put together a new youth council. Sands was enthusiastic about the group saying they were a "fantastic group full of energy and ideas". He had a meeting with them in April and will have a substantive discussion again later in May.
- » Was pleased with the civil society sessions they have been running, which have been great for ideas.

## COVID-19 Response & Business Continuity

### Key points from the Secretariat presentation and statements and questions from the board:

- » There were updates around work on the COVID-19 Response - but nothing shared in writing as it was "just in". Examples were shared of some of how the funding flexibilities are being used: in Ghana money was used for generating and disseminating materials around Gender Based Violence, nutrition info, data- packets so that peer educators/community workers can keep doing their work; in Bangladesh money was leveraged to support an OST clinic; and in Laos money was leveraged to support community based HIV dispensing.
- » Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a vital tool. Most developing countries do not have enough health workers and it was stressed that we cannot afford to lose any of them. Ensuring access to PPE for medical and community health workers is critical.
- » WAMBO the board had approved a pilot, and because it is a pilot there is a 50\$ million cap. The request to the board was to take the cap off on a time limited basis strictly for COVID19 related commodities and this would run in parallel with pilot (which would still have its 50m\$ cap).

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## CRG:

- » We intent to have a communities and a human rights focus in our response to COVID-19. Many delegations expressed their concerns about access to treatment for key populations.
- » Emphasis was made about who we should be building systems for health, and not just health systems.

## Other Key points:

- » Many delegations had concerns regarding expanding WAMBO (Developed, France, Germany, Private Sector, UNAIDS, UK, LAC). Peter Sands committed to a proper paper on the WAMBO proposal and commented that many of the broader issues - are about sustainability, which is not “really relevant” in these circumstances. He also highlighted that the Global Fund always:
  - puts constraints on how commodities can be procured
  - wants to ensure method of procurement is approved.

## Update from the Technical Review Panel:

### Key points from the Secretariat presentation and statements and questions from the board

- » It was a significant year for both the Global Fund and the Technical Review Panel.
- » The quality overall is very good, but do not have complete data yet.
- » Criteria are [now published on the website](#) for the technical review panel.

## COVID-19

- » The Global Fund needs more time as COVID has slowed things down. Window 1 is unique, as it had to be done fully remote.
- » The TRP response to applicant disruption due to COVID-19 includes: doubling the TRP windows, allowing CCMs to submit each component when ready, and will consider in-country disruption when finalizing reviews form recommendations.

## CRG

- » The three civil society delegations were concerned about the Global Fund meeting CRG targets and enquired about key population interventions. They also encourage the TRP to note and support innovative ways of delivering programs and services.
- » Regarding the OIG’s reported inconsistent follow up to the TRP’s feedback in the grant design and ineffective implementation of key mitigating actions - the TRP is the backbone of independent validation of Funding Requests and it is key to ensuring effective uses of resources and achieving genuine impact, therefore, any recommendations MUST be clearly addressed during grant negotiations and throughout the implementation and then effectively monitored and reported back to the TRP.

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## Office of the Inspector General Annual Report 2019

Key documents: [Office of the Inspector General 2019 Annual Report](#)

Key points from the Secretariat presentation and statements and questions from the board:

- » Due to COVID-19 all audits are currently suspended but the office is still working to support countries.
- » The OIG report identified some key areas where we are off track in SO3.
- » Inspector General is retiring, and the Global Fund will be having a process to replace him this summer.
- » Inspector General raised the issue of accountability and the need to strengthen internal accountability for when we meet and do not meet our objectives. He also noted that there needs to remain a strong and independent OIG.

## Day Two:

*Agenda items: The Global Fund Strategy, Inspector General Selection Process, Governance and Priorities*

## The Global Fund Strategy Development

Key documents: [Strategy Development](#) & [Online Strategy Development Process](#)

The Global Fund shared updated timelines for the strategy development and shared that will most likely move the Partnership Forums to quarter one of 2021 and aim to still have face to face meetings but will also support pre-meetings in advance. They will translate documentation to the four languages of the Global Fund as well as Arabic and Portuguese. The aims and objectives of the strategy remain the same and the new strategy must address areas where implementation must be strengthened to improve delivery and results.

Other Key points from the Secretariat presentation and statements and questions from the board:

- » The Global Fund is looking to align with other strategy processes (ie UNAIDS whose target setting will be out in the fall).
- » The website (that was [launched in May](#)) will also allow for virtual consultations
- » The 3 civil society delegations shared their position that that we do not yet have all the information we need to be able to answer the questions on the Strategy development that they are being asked to (a number of key studies/reports/ deep dives are yet to report back) and without these its hard to reflect and provide the necessary feedback.

## COVID-19

- » The strategy IS a priority, but we risk burn-out and not doing a good job while all eyes are on COVID-19;
- » More attention on risks and assumptions is needed because no matter what, we do not know what the world will look like so we need to be stronger in looking at those to be able to reflect back on Strategy as we implement it.

## CRG

- » Key strengths to build upon include continued and increased community and Civil Society engagement and leadership in the response, building up the focus on equity including Human Rights, gender, and the most vulnerable populations.

**“Importance of engaging our strengths in delivery of our purpose.”**

**Carolyn Gomes, ABM Developing Country NGO Delegation**

Box 5: Quote from Carolyn Gomes, ABM Developing Country NGO Delegation

## Inspector General Appointment Process

Key documents: [Inspector General Selection Process 2020](#)

- » The process was discussed and approved. It has principles that include that human rights and key populations knowledge among the process principles (this is not something that was included in the past).
- » It is critical to appoint a new Inspector General as soon as possible. The current Inspector General is leaving in August - so the process must move quickly.
- » The aim is to launch a search in June and hope to make recommendation to the board in late July or early August.
- » They will call for nominations right after the board meeting and civil society candidates are welcome.



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Box 1(repeated): Where to find More Information



Web: [www.globalfundadvocatesnetwork.org](http://www.globalfundadvocatesnetwork.org)

Twitter & Facebook: @GFAdvocates

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