

gfan report:

44th Global Fund Board Meeting

November 2020

Virtual



Introduction

The 44th Board meeting was held virtually over two days, 11-12 November. With pre-sessions held in the days ahead of the meeting. The Implementers group met on the 9th of November and pre-Board briefings on the 10th.

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 intends to share short notes on key areas of the discussions that we think are of interest and 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 44th Board Meeting](#)
- [Who Sits on the Global Fund Board of Directors?](#)
- [Developing Country NGO Delegation Statement](#)
- [Full Report of Community Consultations of the Communities Delegation on the New Global Fund Strategy](#)
- [Developed Country NGO Communique from the 44th Board Meeting](#)

Box 1: Where to find More Information

Day One:

Agenda items: Update from the Executive Director, Office of the Inspector General Progress Report, 2021 Corporate Work Plan and Operating Expense Budget.

Update from the Executive Director:

[Report of the Executive Director](#)

COVID-19:

» The focus for the Global Fund Secretariat regarding COVID-19 is:

- taking care of and protecting the Global Fund secretariat staff community;
- managing the workload to ensure people are not burning out with the increased workloads and changes in how work is done because of the pandemic.

"It's clear that the road has been diverted by the onset of COVID-19 . Although we have backtracked on progress made, that backtracking doesn't mean that we've lost our way. Rather, it's an opportunity for us to look critically at our strategies for how we can regain the ground and harness the momentum needed to get us to our target destination"

~ Robin Montgomery, Board Member from the Developed Country NGO Delegation

Box 2: From the Developed Country NGO delegation statement

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- » Right now things are “pretty bleak”. COVID-19 is killing the same number of people each week as AIDS, TB and malaria combined and the global response is still not up to par, and our resource mobilization to address it is behind what it should be.
- » Even if some countries have not been hit as hard by the COVID-19 pandemic as others, we still do not have enough information to know why those countries have been impacted less, and we cannot assume it will stay that way throughout the pandemic.
- » Beyond the human impact, no country is immune to the economic impact of COVID-19 and the economic consequences of the pandemic will fuel health inequities.
- » The Global Fund’s approach to global health is key to also fighting COVID-19 and the Global Fund will have a vital role to play.
- » The Fund’s involvement in ACT-A has helped push for the focus of “leave no one behind” and for protection to community health workers (in particular they had to push for PPE as a critical tool).

Some of you worry about the Global Fund being distracted on delivering on AIDS, TB and malaria by COVID19. The WORLD is distracted by COVID19 and AIDS, TB and Malaria is simply a “sideshow” to the world. Unless we engage, and leverage all we have learned, we risk being pushed to the margins and that is not how we minimize AIDS, TB and malaria impact and prepare the foundations for a strong 7th Replenishment.

~ Peter Sands, ED of the Global Fund

Box 3: Paraphrased comment from Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund

Strategy Development:

- » The Global Fund’s Strategy Development is a key priority and now is the crunch time for the strategy process.
- » This time around it has been a slower process due to COVID-19 and setting up virtual consultations.

Other Key points:

- » There are always inevitable tensions around when the Global Fund is more “prescriptive” about what to include and that trade-off is an erosion of the founding principle of country ownership and so is one area we should be cautious about how hard/far the Fund can push countries. Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM’s) ultimately have to take the guidance provided and decide what they think is best in their respective environments.

“The Report by the Executive Director highlighted that Covid-19 has created challenges for Sustainability, Transition and Co-Financing (STC). [The Developing Country NGO Delegation] called for a halt to any planned transitions for countries, until the approach to sustainability has developed a new strategy and realistic plan that takes into account the new context.”

» On the role of the Global Fund in Global Health Security - there is a need to get back on track. The Fund needs to make AIDS, TB, and malaria a part of Global Health Security (GHS). Currently, the idea behind GHS is that it only protects people from diseases in rich countries. We need to re-frame it in the context of NO ONE LEFT BEHIND. We know how to defeat AIDS, TB and malaria, but millions of people still die every year.

» Many board members both implementing and funders called for a strong focus on the mandate of the Global Fund to focus on AIDS, TB and malaria. Concerns were also raised about the over-prioritization of COVID-19 (and indeed much of the Executive Directors report focused on COVID-19).

Box 4: From the [Developing Country NGO Delegation Statement](#).

Office of the Inspector General Progress Report:

Progress Report

Key points from the presentation:

- » Like others, the Acting OIG has had some challenges during the era of COVID but has adapted to provide assurance reporting an exponential growth in “live” and “on-the-spot” advice as the Global Fund has rolled out funds under C19RM and continued its core business
- » The Acting OIG also indicated that they have done significant work, including co-hosting a global health oversight conference to address current issues of ensuring rigorous live auditing in the era of COVID and from those on-going conversations, that the GF OIG is confident they remain consistent with other like-minded organizations in their approach to virtual work
- » Board Members commended the Acting OIG and the staff of the OIG office for the work being done in these challenging times and openness to collaboration and willingness to engage. Several constituencies noted that the delays in providing some of the “usual” OIG tools AMA’s (for e.g. there are currently 14 overdue Agreed Management Actions (AMA’s) which could in itself be a risk in not having those recommendations and reflections during the strategy development period) and called for the need to prioritize issues and provide reflections that could be considered and reflected in the strategy process.
- » Additionally, Board Members raised the question of co-financing – on how will co-financing and the quality of domestic financing be monitored and key findings shared in the fast-paced, ever-shifting dynamic of COVID-19 without significant lags in data.

2021 Corporate Work Plan and Operating Expense Budget:

Opex Budget and Work-plan

Key points from the presentation:

- » It was recommended by the Audit and Finance committee to pass the Operating Expense (OPEX) Budget.
- » During its October meetings, the committee spent a lot of time looking at the adjusted budget items due to COVID-19.
- » For the first time in 4 years, the Board approved (unanimously) a slight increase from 300 million to 315 million for the Global Fund Secretariats 2021 Operating Expense Budget – but the Board did not approve an increase to the 3 year overall OPEX of 900 million
- » 2020 will come under budget, due to the special circumstances related to COVID-19 such as less travel.
- » 2020 budget was 305 million, the proposed 2021 budget is 315 million (still below 7% of funding). This budget will allow for extra funding to be more flexible due to COVID-19 and to start the next cycle of grants efficiently.
- » Key drivers of 2021 budget:
 - COVID-19 (savings from travel)
 - Increase in country assurance
 - Health financing, human rights and more

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Day Two:

Agenda items: COVID-19 Response & Business continuity, Development of the next Global Fund Strategy, Governance Priorities

COVID-19 Response & Business Continuity

COVID-19 Report

- » In this opening session on Day 2, Global Fund Executive Director, Peter Sands, referenced the concerns raised by delegations in statements and on Day 1 including the need to support more community-led initiatives in the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) and shared his own disappointment there has not been more of these as well. He informed the board that they do not have precise numbers but a very quick analysis suggests it is in the 5-7% range of the C19RM funding to date went to community-led initiatives.
- » He committed to do a retrospective look, a deep dive in the future, but did not present any new suggestions on how to adjust at this stage without the complicated trade offs regarding the core principle of country ownership and how directive the Fund can be when honouring that core principle.

Other Key points from the Secretariat presentation:

- » ACT-A has determined that the urgent need right now is 5 billion USD
- » Therapeutics has a smaller immediate need as currently dexamethasone is the main drug needed and it is relatively cheap, it is likely more expensive drugs will be needed down the line, but is not part of the immediate need ask.
- » What is needed is a paradigm shift on how we think about data. Diseases don't work on a 3 year cycle and the Global Fund needs to use data to become more agile in its response. For e.g. under current data collection processes it will take nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of 2021 before we have new, confirmed TB data from this period for e.g. whereas on any given day there is up to date, global data available on COVID-19 cases, deaths and recovered cases. This shows how better, faster data is possible but we aren't there yet for AIDS, TB and malaria
- » COVID-19 has been instructive on ways partnerships can work together and the Global Action Plan should adopt the model of ACT-A to work better with our partners.
- » Regarding COVID-19 resource mobilization, there have been a few donors step up. It is a complementary effort and the Fund does not want to lose Replenishment funds to COVID-19. Therefore the focus is on immediate and urgent needs and the Fund is reaching out beyond usual donors to unlock new money.
- » Part of the reason we need to remain part of the COVID-19 conversation is to make sure that AIDS, TB and malaria remain part of the global health discussion and that we keep focus that no one is left behind.
- » Pledge conversion is a priority, and happens behind the scenes. The Fund expressed that current progress is on track and in line with previous replenishments (even slightly ahead).

The Global Fund produces regularly updated Situation Reports that provide more details about the Global Fund's engagement and expenditures in response to COVID-19.

Box 5: More on COVID-19

qfan report:

Strategy Development

- » The strategy IS a priority, but we risk burn-out and not doing a good job while all eyes are on COVID-19.
- » The strategy needs a more robust examination of risks and assumptions that will underpin the Fund's ability to deliver on the strategy and its Key Performance Indicators. We don't know "what the world will look like" post COVID-19 and so as an organization we need to be stronger at understanding the risks and assumptions we have when we develop the Strategy to be able to better guide is while we are implementing it in the future.

CRG & Key Populations

- » 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.

Statements and questions from the board:

- » Concerns were raised that we are failing on all 3 targets for AIDS, TB and malaria and we are now "measuring in lost lives." In particular Key Populations are the most vulnerable.
- » Several delegations echoed the call for the focus on key populations with many including gender and the importance of community-led organizations to reach the most vulnerable populations.
- » Emphasis was made by several board members on the need for realistic modeling.

"We are concerned that the continued focus on our response to Covid-19 as a stand-alone may be overshadowing other priorities. In the initial stages of the emergency it was necessary to respond quickly. The Board now needs to critically assess and prioritise the extent of our response to Covid-19, to ensure that we remain on track with our core mission related to HIV, TB and malaria. As we have stated before, we strongly believe that the many other social and structural barriers to us reaching our mission still exist, such as criminalisation of key populations and other human rights barriers, and our focus on Covid-19 should be primarily on mitigating the impact on the three diseases."

~ Andriy Klepikov, Board Member for the Developing Country NGO constituency.

Box 6: From the [Developing Country NGO statement](#).

Development of the next Global Fund Strategy

Report on the Global Fund Strategy

- » The Secretariat suggested in their presentation that globally we are off track on our 2030 targets for AIDS, TB and malaria and while this was true before the pandemic, COVID-19 has exacerbated this reality and presents significant challenges to get back on track.
- » The biggest gap in targets is case detection. Across the world in GF eligible countries, COVID-19 is making it more difficult for new cases to be found as health services have been restricted in many places to addressing COVID-19. COVID-19 is also expected to pinch global budgets, so it is critical that the next Global Fund strategy clearly make the case for greater prioritization for health at all times, and not just during a global pandemic.

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- » The focus should be on equity - when financing is short, the poor and vulnerable are left out.
- » New tools are on the horizon that can be used to combat the three diseases and deployed to drive incidence down and save lives. And the faster we introduce and scale up new projects the more lives we can save.
- » And while not new as a result or impact from COVID-19, the Strategy Key performance indicators (KPIs) need to be updated and strengthened significantly to ensure we are tracking indicators that provide real, timely assessments of those aspects of the Global Fund Strategy that we aim to track and implement.

Statements and questions from the board:

- » Outside of this Board Meeting, the Board delegations have been engaged in a number of conversations (meetings) and a recent retreat to discuss and prioritize issues for the Strategy Development.
- » Clear concern was raised by both the Civil Society delegations and the Communities delegation about the process thus far in determining the Strategy. Key issues have been around how the documents that capture various conversations are framing the issues for discussion. They additionally questioned the level and opportunity for real engagement and how delegations are being asked to participate when time is always very tight with discussions being challenging. And finally, concerns were raised about what delegations were seeing “back” in terms of decisions from those conversations, and what they see “back” in terms of decisions.
- » Many delegations asked for a more detailed report ahead of the next BM on the strategy at the end of November (which will be provided) and more clarity from the Global Fund Secretariat to allow time/space for all the

other issues and to have an additional/extraordinary Board Meeting in 2021.

GFAN has pulled together a resource [page for the Global Fund Strategy Development](#) where we list resources, relevant links, and provide a regularly updated summary of [civil society and communities input into the Global Fund Strategy Development for post-2022](#).

Box 8: GFAN's Global Fund Strategy Development Page

The Communities Delegation to the Global Fund in their report on the Global Fund Strategy detailed 11 priorities including:

- Improve its performance of promotion and protection of gender equality and human rights.
- Place people at the centre of all responses.
- Promote and support advocacy to remove structural barriers to responses to AIDS, TB and malaria.
- Engage with communities as professionals with valued expertise.
- Keep a focus on AIDS, TB and Malaria, while situating them in the wider, emerging context of planetary health.
- Prioritise community systems strengthening to support community-led interventions and community-based organizations thereby contributing to resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH).
- Renew commitment to responsible transitioning, where communities and countries are supported.

Box 7: From the [Communities Delegation report](#) to the Global Fund on its Strategy Development

qfan report:

- » The Communities delegation and both the Civil Society delegations emphasized that it was communities who called for the creation of the Global Fund and that we need to make communities the priority if we want to end the 3 diseases. There is strong and robust community leadership and the Fund needs to listen to them and include as many community and civil society representatives in the strategy process as possible, including, importantly, ensuring key populations are well represented at the Partnership Forums. There was broad support from other board members (both implementing countries and funders).
- » Many board members also shared their support with comments made that if people cannot access services due to human rights violations - then the Global Fund will not reach its mandate, emphasizing that most new cases are those in key populations. To address AIDS, TB and Malaria we must start with doing everything to proactively ensure and respect human rights.

Governance Priorities

- » In 2021 there will be an additional board meeting (envisioned for July) to decide on the new Global Fund Strategy.
- » It was emphasized that as soon as it is safe and logistically feasible for the board to meet in person, face-to-face meetings will resume.

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- Developing Country NGO **Delegation Statement**
- Full **Report of Community Consultations of the Communities Delegation** on the New Global Fund Strategy
- Developed Country NGO **Communique from the 44th Board Meeting**

Box 1(repeated): Where to find More Information



Web: www.globalfundadvocatesnetwork.org

Twitter & Facebook: @GFAdvocates

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/HereIAmCampaign