GLOBAL FUND OBSERVER (GFO), an independent newsletter about the Global Fund provided by Aidspan to over 7,000 subscribers in 170 countries.

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1. ALERT: Start Preparing Now for Round 8!

> The Global Fund is scheduled to issue its Call for Proposals for Round 8 on 1 March 2008. From that date, applicants will have 120 days to prepare and submit their proposals.   Most applicants in recent rounds of funding have had to rush to get their proposals completed on time, and some have failed to get their proposals approved because of that rush. So the time to start is now.

2. NEWS: *"Aidspan Guide to Understanding Global Fund Processes for Grant Implementation – Volume 2: From First Disbursement to Phase 2 Renewal"* is Released

> Volume 2 of the *"The Aidspan Guide to Understanding Global Fund Processes for Grant Implementation"* has just been published. It covers the period from first disbursement to Phase 2 Renewal. It is designed to help grant recipients understand the Global Fund processes involved in implementing a newly approved grant, and deal with problems that may arise during implementation.

3. ANALYSIS: TRP Comments on Round 7 Proposals

> The TRP has identified a number of issues with respect to the Round 7 applications and review process, and has made several recommendations that could lead to changes in future rounds. These deal, in part, with getting applicants to be clearer about their successes (or not) with previous grants; cautions that apply when there are multiple PRs; the need to build local capacity to develop proposals; issues regarding health systems strengthening; the need for clearer budgets; and the values of strengthening operations research capacity.

4. NEWS: Aidspan Documents for "In-Country Submissions" Are Released, to Help with Round 8 Applications

> Aidspan has just published four documents to assist CCMs with the process of soliciting "in-country submissions", a required part of the proposal-development process.

5. NEWS: Spanish-Language Version of *"The Aidspan Guide to Building and Running an Effective CCM (Second Edition)"* is Released

> *"The Aidspan Guide to Building and Running an Effective CCM (Second Edition)"* is now available in Spanish at www.aidspan.org/guides. A French-language version will be posted shortly. The next article reports this news in Spanish.

6. NOTICIA: La Versión en Español de *"La Guía de Aidspan para Conformar y Manejar un MCP Efectivo (Segunda Edición)"* ha sido publicada.

> La segunda edición de *"La Guía de Aidspan para Conformar y Manejar un MCP Efectivo"* acaba de ser publicada en español.

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1. ALERT: Start Preparing Now for Round 8!
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The Global Fund is scheduled to issue its Call for Proposals for Round 8 on 1 March 2008. From that date, applicants will have 120 days to prepare and submit their proposals.   This may sound like a fair amount of time but, in our experience, most applicants in recent rounds of funding have had to rush to get their proposals completed on time, and some have failed to get their proposals approved because of that rush.

Applicants will need most of the 120 days just to fill out what has always been a rather complicated proposal form and to obtain the necessary agreements and signatures. For this reason, and because the Global Fund requires that CCMs engage in a process of soliciting and reviewing in-country submissions for possible inclusion in the CCM's proposal – a process that itself could take a couple of months – we recommend that in all rounds, CCMs begin working on their proposals several months ahead of the Call for Proposals.

Global Fund requirements state, in effect, that the process to be followed by CCMs should be as follows:

1. The CCM publicly invites a broad range of stakeholders within the country to develop suggestions as to what should be included in the proposal that the CCM will send to the Global Fund.

2. The stakeholders prepare their suggestions and send them to the CCM. (These suggestions are contained in what we refer to as *in-country submissions.*)

3. The CCM reviews the in-country submissions, and decides which ones will be incorporated into (or, at least, reflected in) the CCM proposal.

4. The CCM completes the Fund's proposal form, gets it signed by all CCM members, and submits it to the Fund.

Doing this thoroughly will take some applicants longer than the 120 days between the Call for Proposals and the application deadline. But there's no reason not to start the process now. Steps (1) through (3) can all be worked on before the Fund issues its Call for Proposals and publishes the Round 8 proposal form. Furthermore, applicants can review the Round 7 proposal form and guidelines (at www.theglobalfund.org/en/apply/call7) to see the basic conceptual approach – goals, objectives, service delivery areas, major activities, indicators, targets and budgets – that has been used in recent rounds and will be used again in Round 8.

A CCM that wants to be ahead of the game for Round 8 will request in-country submissions and invite suggestions from a broad range of other stakeholders, review these, and do serous work designing the project(s) that it wants the Global Fund to finance – BEFORE the Fund issues its Call for Proposals two-and-a-half months from now.

The following extract from the recently released *"Aidspan Guide to Building and Running and Effective CCM – Second Edition"* (*CCM Guide*) explains how CCMs can manage the proposal development process:

In order to manage the process of developing a proposal, we suggest:

- that the CCM form a proposal development team, made up of CCM members representing the different stakeholders; and

- that the proposal development team coordinate the proposal development process, including soliciting and reviewing in-country submissions and writing, or overseeing the writing of, the final proposal.

The CCM could decide to add some [outside] resource persons to the proposal development team if it makes sense to do so….

The proposal development team should define the proposal development process that will be followed, complete with timelines.

Establishing a proposal development team does not diminish the responsibility of the entire CCM for the proposal development process and the proposal itself (which all CCM members have to sign). It is just a way of permitting the CCM to manage the process.

At the outset of the proposal development process, the CCM should review the six minimum requirements for CCMs to ensure that it meets the requirements.

Copies of Aidspan's *CCM Guide* are available at www.aidspan.org/guides.

The *CCM Guide* also contains a section on ways in which the CCM can manage the in-country submissions process.

The Global Fund has not provided a template for CCMs to use for in-country submissions. Individual CCMs can always develop their own template, but this is not an easy task. In the absence of any template, some CCMs have asked those developing in-country submissions to use the proposal form that the CCM has to use when submitting full proposals to the Global Fund. This leads to those developing in-country submissions having to do lots of unnecessary and possibly confusing work, because there are large sections of the Global Fund's proposal form – relating to the CCM itself and to the national context – that organisations preparing in-country submissions do not in fact need to deal with.

Consequently, Aidspan has, for the first time, prepared a sample template that CCMs can adapt for use in their in-country submissions process. This is described in a separate article, *"News: Aidspan Documents for 'In-Country Submissions' Are Released, to Help with Round 8 Applications,"* in this issue of GFO.

Note: As Aidspan (publisher of GFO) has done since Round 4, we will prepare an "Aidspan Guide to Round 8 Applications to the Global Fund," the first part of which will be released in January and the second part of which will be released as soon as possible after the Round 8 proposal form is published by the Fund on 1 March.

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2. NEWS: *"Aidspan Guide to Understanding Global Fund Processes for Grant Implementation – Volume 2: From First Disbursement to Phase 2 Renewal"* is Released
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Volume 2 of the *"The Aidspan Guide to Understanding Global Fund Processes for Grant Implementation"* has just been published. It covers the period from first disbursement to Phase 2 Renewal. It is accessible at no charge at www.aidspan.org/guides, where various other Aidspan Guides are also available. Versions of Volume 2 in French and Spanish will be posted early in 2008. Aidspan is the publisher of GFO.

(Volume 1, published in December 2005, covers the period from the signing of the Grant Agreement to first disbursement. Volume 1 was originally published under the title "The Aidspan Guide to Effective Implementation of Global Fund Grants.")

"The Aidspan Guide to Understanding Global Fund Processes for Grant Implementation" is designed to help grant recipients understand the Global Fund processes involved in implementing a newly approved grant, and deal with problems that may arise during implementation. It focuses on the interactions between the Principal Recipient (PR) and other stakeholders, particularly the Global Fund and the Local Fund Agent (LFA). The guide does *not* attempt to provide advice concerning the implementation of actual activities in Global Fund-financed projects.

The 50-page guide has been written primarily for CCMs and PRs, the major actors involved in the implementation process. A secondary target audience for this guide is Sub-Recipients (SRs).

The main sections of Volume 2 are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background
- Overview of the Global Fund
- Structure of the Global Fund
- Summary of the Key Information Included in the Grant Agreement

Chapter 2: Ongoing Reporting, Reviews and Disbursements
- The Progress Update/Disbursement Request
- PSM Reporting Requirements
- Annual Reports
- Ensuring that the Performance Framework Document is Current
- Role of the CCM
- Grant Performance Report
- Factors That Can Delay Disbursements

Chapter 3: Annual Financial Statements and Audits
- Annual Financial Statements
- Annual Audit
- The Process After the Audit is Completed

Chapter 4: Grant Revisions
- Amendments to the Grant Agreement
- The Use of Implementation Letters
- Amendments to the PR's Budget, Workplan, PSM Plan and M&E Plan

Chapter 5: Technical Support to Improve Project Implementation
- Role of the Global Fund
- Sources of TS

Chapter 6: The Phase 2 Renewal Process
- Overview of the Process and Timelines
- Roles of the CCM and the PR
- Key Success Factors
- CCM Request for Continued Funding: What the Global Fund Requires
- Role of the LFA
- Review of the CCM Request for Continued Funding
- Decision Whether to Continue Funding
- The Grant Extension Process

The guide also contains a list of Global Fund guidance documents, tools and templates, as well as information on how to obtain copies.

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3. ANALYSIS: TRP Comments on Round 7 Proposals
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As it does for each round of funding, the Technical Review Panel (TRP) has identified a number of issues with respect to the Round 7 applications and review process, and has made several recommendations to the Global Fund (and others) that could lead to changes in future rounds. The TRP's recommendations are contained in a report entitled *"Report Of The Technical Review Panel And The Secretariat On Round 7 Proposals"* (the Report).

In this article, Aidspan summarizes the major issues and TRP recommendations. Some of these issues were "new" to Round 7, meaning that were not present, or at least were not very prominent, in previous rounds. This information in this article will be useful to CCMs and other organisations that are considering applying for funding in Round 8 in 2008.

(The full text of the Report is available at www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/technical/report.)

Impact of previous grants. In order to be recommended for funding, proposals have to describe any challenges encountered with grants currently being implemented; what actions have been taken to overcome these challenges; and how the new proposal will complement and add to existing grants. The TRP wants to see evidence that previous investments by the Global Fund are being well used before recommending additional funding. In its Report, the TRP says that it "continues to hold the view that the existence of prior Global Fund (or other donor/partner) grants, and the disbursement history and performance of these grants are themselves fundamental to judgments about absorptive capacity, feasibility and likelihood of effective implementation…"

As a result of recommendations made by the TRP at the end of Round 6, changes were made to the Global Fund's Round 7 guidelines and proposal form to ensure that information on existing grants was clearly requested. Nevertheless, as the TRP observes in its Report, many Round 7 proposals contained insufficient information on the impact of existing grants.

When evaluating proposals, the TRP also looks at the success that PRs nominated in a new proposal have had in implementing previous grants. In its Report, the TRP reiterates some of the observations it made at the end of Round 6. It says that where there is a significant grant from the previous round either which has not yet been signed, or which has been signed but for which disbursements have not yet commenced at the time of the TRP review, "the TRP pays particular attention to the increased burden that two concurrent same disease components may have on the implementation capacities of both the nominated Principal Recipient and the in-country implementation partners. In such circumstances, where the new proposal is for a scale up of the same interventions, rather than addressing a separate and clear gap in a national program or strategy, the TRP is less likely to recommend the proposal for funding absent demonstrated clear absorptive capacity." In its Report, the TRP recommends that applicants consider carefully the timing of their applications, particularly where the same PR is proposed.

The TRP also notes that while it has access to the most recent Grant Performance Reports (GPRs) prepared by the Global Fund Secretariat, these reports were not always adequately completed. The TRP recommends in its Report that the Secretariat improve the accuracy and relevance of the information provided in GPRs.

Use of multiple PRs. As reported previously in *GFO,* starting with Round 8, the Global Fund will strongly encourage the use of dual-track financing, whereby there are multiple PRs – e.g. one from government and one from civil society. (See "Main Decisions Made at Global Fund April Board Meeting" in *GFO* Issue 75, 30 April 2007, available via www.aidspan.org/gfo.) In its report, the TRP says that the use of multiple PRs can improve grant implementation, but that there are also risks and challenges associated with this practice. The TRP says that multiple overlapping activities could lead to difficulties in achieving harmonization and alignment; and that where the activities of the respective PRs are interlinked, there are inherent risks to performance and achievement of outcomes if one of the PRs has a stronger implementation capability than the other(s).

The TRP recommends that when multiple PRs are proposed, the Round 8 proposal form require that applicants clearly outline how coordination will be achieved between or among the PRs, in much the same way that applicants are currently asked to explain the inter-relationships among different SRs. The TRP recommends that applicants be required to focus not only on coordination between PRs at the oversight level, but also in regard to day-to-day integration of activities and, where possible, harmonization of key reporting and disbursement dates.

Building local capacity to develop proposals. In Round 7, there was a notable improvement in the quality of malaria proposals as compared to previous rounds. In its report, the TRP says this appears to be largely due to the support applicants received from the Roll Back Malaria Harmonization Working Group and the World Health Organization's Global Malaria Programme throughout the Round 7 proposal development process. (In Round 6, there was a similar improvement in the quality of tuberculosis proposals, which was attributed to support provided by organisations such as the Stop TB Partnership.)

The TRP says that while support from key partners obviously leads to technically stronger proposals, it also makes it more difficult to determine the extent to which the proposal reflects ownership by the country and local stakeholders. So, while the TRP encourages applicants to seek technical support in the preparation of proposals, it also says that applicants ought to be able to obtain such support locally.   For that to happen, the TRP says, more resources need to be allocated to building local capacity to develop strong, fundable proposals. The TRP says that the necessary resources should come either from applicants including capacity building within prior proposals, or from governments or their development partners prioritising it in their budget and planning processes.

Health systems strengthening. The Round 7 proposal form included a detailed section on health system strengthening (HSS), designed to encourage requests for financial support for strategic actions to address health system constraints. The TRP notes that of the $2,762 million in total funding approved by the Global Fund Board in Round 7, $363 million is targeted towards funding HSS actions, and says that this represents a major investment. However, the TRP believes that there is an opportunity to do much more in this area.

In the opinion of the TRP, there is still confusion among many stakeholders concerning what actions can be considered within a Global Fund proposal. The TRP says that many proposed HSS actions focus too much on addressing obstacles to delivery of health services, and not enough on planning, financing and building the health systems in the first place. The TRP recommends that there be an intensified effort at country level to improve the understanding of what HSS is and is not, and to strengthen CCM capacity to address HSS issues.

In its Report, the TRP advances a series of recommendations that it hopes will stimulate a broader discussion on this topic. Specifically, the TRP recommends that the Global Fund and/or its partners focus their support on:

- including information on health systems and institutional development in regional briefing sessions before and during proposal preparation;

- providing intensive technical support on HSS for Round 8 similar to that provided on malaria for Round 7 proposals;

- making a small number of revisions to the HSS section in the Global Fund's guidelines and proposal form to better highlight the difference between systems strengthening issues and the tools necessary to implement the systems (e.g., training, equipment and renovation of infrastructure or buildings); and

- adding further health systems indicators to the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Budget template. A common reason for not recommending proposals for funding is that there are substantial weaknesses in the budget. In its Report, the TRP notes that many proposals submitted for Round 7 had budgets that contained substantial calculation errors, lacked clarity on what is being requested, or lacked details that would permit an informed assessment of the feasibility of the proposal.

The TRP says that although there have been several attempts over the years to develop useful guidance, applicants still vary enormously in the level of detail they provide in their budgets. For this reason, the TRP recommends that the Global Fund develop a standardized budget template for applicants to complete as a required part of future proposals (while still allowing applicants to present additional information in alternative formats as annexes to the proposal).

(In the past, the Global Fund has been reluctant to provide a budget template, preferring to have applicants come up with their own format. The Fund provided what it called a "Budget Analysis Template" for Round 6, but did not include this for Round 7. Instead, the Fund provided on its website some model budgets from previous rounds of funding, but told applicants that the model budgets were "not templates for applicants to copy, but simply examples of good budgets.")

Strengthening research capacity. Although the Global Fund does not fund clinical or basic science research, it is prepared to support operational research. In its Report, the TRP says that the "operations/implementation" research components within proposals submitted in Round 7 were generally weakly articulated, and that this constitutes "a major missed opportunity … Within the

extraordinary scale-up of the fight against the three diseases, there are many areas where the most effective and efficient methods to overcome bottlenecks are not yet known."

The TRP says that it believes that operations/implementation research needs to go beyond the monitoring and evaluation of interventions supported by Global Fund financing and should "seek systematic solutions to existing bottlenecks, and contribute to a country's understanding of the effectiveness of different interventions, including how differing interventions contribute to the attainment of planned outcomes and impact."

In its report, the TRP says that applicants should be encouraged to include within their proposals realistic plans for strengthening local capacity to carry out operations/implementation research that is closely tied in to the overall objectives of their projects. The TRP recommends that the Secretariat make adjustments to its Round 8 guidelines to incorporate further guidance for potential applicants.

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4. NEWS: Aidspan Documents for "In-Country Submissions" Are Released, to Help with Round 8 Applications
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As discussed in article 1 above (*Alert: Start Preparing Now for Round 8!*), the Global Fund requires each CCM to seek submissions from domestic organizations regarding what they would like the CCM to include in each proposal to the Fund. Accordingly, Aidspan has just published four documents to assist CCMs with this process of soliciting "in-country submissions". These are:

1. A sample *"Template for In-Country Submissions"*

2. A *"Guidance Note for Completing the Template for In-Country Submissions"*

3. A sample *"Template for In-Country Submissions (Annotated Version)"*

4. A *"Cover Note for CCMs on the Aidspan Documents for In-Country Submissions"*

All four documents are accessible at no charge at www.aidspan.org/aidspanpublications. Versions of the documents in French, Spanish and Russian will be posted by the end of December.

Aidspan has prepared these documents because there are currently no forms or templates available to assist CCMs with this in-country submissions process.

The first two documents – the *Template* and the *Guidance Note* – are designed to be used by organisations that are developing in-country submissions. CCMs should adapt these documents and then include them in their calls for submissions. The third document – the *annotated version* of the *Template* – is intended to be used solely by CCMs. It contains suggestions on ways in which CCMs can adapt the Template to meet their particular needs. The fourth document – the *Cover Note* – provides CCMs with detailed information on the purpose and use of the first three documents.

The sample *Template* is intended to serve two purposes: (1) to enable CCMs to obtain in-country submissions that they can effectively evaluate; and (2) to enable CCMs to obtain the information in a form that they can easily collate into their proposal to the Global Fund.

CCMs will be able to use the Aidspan documents for in-country submissions when preparing their Round 8 proposals to the Global Fund. The Fund will issue its call for proposals for Round 8 on 1 March 2008. The deadline for applications will be 1 July 2008. *Aidspan strongly recommends that CCMs issue their calls for in-country submissions well before the Global Fund issues its Call for Proposals. This is because there is not enough time between the Call for Proposals and the deadline date for applications for the CCM to both (a) solicit and review in-country submissions, and (b) do all that is required to develop the proposal (based, in part, on the in-country submissions) and complete the proposal form.*

Note: Although the Aidspan documents for in-country submissions have been designed for use by CCMs, they are equally applicable to Sub-National Coordinating Mechanisms (Sub-CCMs), and can

be adapted for use by Regional Coordinating Mechanisms (RCMs) and Regional Organisations (ROs).

Aidspan provides additional guidance concerning the in-country submissions process in *"The Aidspan Guide to Building and Running an Effective CCM – Second Edition,"* released in September 2007, and available at www.aidspan.org/guides.

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5. NEWS: Spanish-Language Version of "The Aidspan Guide to Building and Running an Effective CCM (Second Edition)" is Released
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"The Aidspan Guide to Building and Running an Effective CCM (Second Edition)" is now available in Spanish at www.aidspan.org/guides. The English version of the guide was posted in September 2007. A French-language version will be posted shortly. For a full description of the contents of the guide, see Issue 77 of *GFO* (available at www.aidspan.org/gfo). That description is adapted and translated into Spanish in the next article.

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6. NOTICIA: La Versión en Español de *"La Guía de Aidspan para Conformar y Manejar un MCP Efectivo (Segunda Edición)"* ha sido publicada
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[Editor's note: This article is an adaptation in Spanish of an article that appeared in English in GFO Issue 77.]

La segunda edición de "La Guía de Aidspan para Conformar y Manejar un MCP Efectivo" acaba de ser publicada en español. La misma puede obtenerse gratuitamente en la página de Internet www.aidspan.org/guides donde también encontrará otras guías de Aidspan. La versión en inglés de la guía también está disponible en esa dirección. La versión en francés se publicará pronto. La segunda edición de la guía contiene mucha más información que la primera edición, la cual fue publicada en el 2004.

La guía ofrece asesoría sobre todos los aspectos de la estructura y operaciones del MCP, y toma en cuenta las experiencias de distintos MCPs. La guía es útil tanto para los MCPs que están enfrentando problemas como para los MCPs que están funcionando bien, pero quisieran mejorar su rendimiento.

Aun cuando esta guía ha sido preparada para los MCPs, casi todo su contenido se aplica igualmente a los Mecanismos Sub-Nacionales de Coordinación de País (Sub-MCPs). Asimismo, parte de su contenido también es relevante para los Mecanismos de Coordinación Regional (MCRs)

Las principales secciones de la guía son las siguientes:

Capítulo 1: Introducción y Antecedentes
- Los Diez Problemas Más Comunes que Enfrentan los MCPs
- Visión General sobre el Fondo Mundial
- Políticas y Directrices del Fondo Mundial sobre los MCPs

Capítulo 2: El Lugar del MCP en los Contextos de país y del Fondo Mundial
- La Relación MCP-Fondo Mundial
- La Política de los MCPs

Capítulo 3: Temas Generales de Gobernabilidad
- Declaración de Mandato
- Declaración de Funciones Y Responsabilidades
- Principios Fundamentales
- Términos de Referencia

Capítulo 4: Estructura del MCP
- Tamaño
- Comités
- Secretaría

Capítulo 5: Afiliación del MCP
- Representación de los Distintos Sectores
- Representación de las Personas que Viven con las Enfermedades
- Representación de los Grupos Vulnerables
- Representación de la Mujeres
- Responsabilidades de los Miembros
- Proceso de Selección
- Categorías de Miembros: Con Derecho a Voto, Sin Derecho a Voto, Observadores
- Inasistencias

Capítulo 6: Operaciones del MCP
- Importancia de la Transparencia
- Proceso de Toma de Decisiones
- Plena Participación de los Miembros en las Deliberaciones y en el Trabajo del MCP
- Reuniones del MCP
- Cobertura de los Gastos del MCP
- Conflicto de Intereses

Capítulo 7: Desarrollo de Propuestas
- Diseño e implementación de un Proceso de Desarrollo de la Propuesta
- El Proceso de Presentación de Subpropuestas
- Selección del BP(s) y SB(s)

Capítulo 8: Implementación del Proyecto
- La Función Supervisora del MCP
- ¿Cómo pueden los MCPs Monitorear el progreso de la implementación del Proyecto?
- ¿Cómo deberían los MCPs trabajar con los BPs para identificar problemas y desarrollar soluciones?

Capítulo 9: Renovación Fase 2

Capítulo 10: Intercambio de Información y Comunicación con los Representados

Capítulo 11: Apoyo Técnico y Fortalecimiento de la Capacidad del MCP

Capítulo 12: Evaluación del rendimiento del MCP y Resolución de Problemas dentro del MCP

La guía también contiene un modelo de términos de referencia (TdR) que los MCPs pueden adaptar a sus circunstancias particulares.

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END OF NEWSLETTER
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This is an issue of the GLOBAL FUND OBSERVER (GFO) Newsletter.

GFO is an independent source of news, analysis and commentary about the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (www.theglobalfund.org). GFO is emailed to over 7,000 subscribers in 170 countries at least twelve times per year.

GFO is a free service of Aidspan (www.aidspan.org), based in Nairobi, Kenya. Aidspan is a non-governmental organization that serves as an independent watchdog of the Global Fund, promoting increased support for, and effectiveness of, the Fund.

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GFO is currently provided in English only. It is hoped later to provide it in additional languages.

GFO Editor and Aidspan Executive Director: Bernard Rivers (rivers@aidspan.org, +254-20-445-4321)

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