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of the Global Fund

DON'T COMPROMISE YOUR PRINCIPLES IN THE NEW FUNDING MODEL, GLOBAL FUND TOLD

Activists disrupt session at AIDS 2012 on the future of the Global Fund

Jaramillo signs pledge to oppose the use of funding caps

The Global Fund's new funding model must be demand driven, and must not place caps on requests from individual countries. This was the message delivered by a group of activists on 26 July at a session on the Global Fund at the International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C.

The Global Fund is in the process of designing a new model to replace the rounds-based system of funding.

The activists disrupted the start of a 90-minute session on "The Global Fund: The Next Five Years," just as the first presenter, Global Fund General Manager Gabriel Jaramillo, was about to speak. They chanted "End AIDS, no caps on our lives" and carried signs, one of which read "GF CAPS = DEATH."

After the activists demonstrated for about two minutes, their spokesperson, Rosemary Mburu, was allowed to address the session. Ms Mburu is coordinator of the Africa Civil Society Platform at World AIDS Campaign.

Ms Mburu said that the world desperately needs a fully funded and strong Global Fund because of the urgent need to massively scale up life-saving services. She said that the activists had a specific message for Mr Jaramillo and others from the Global Fund: “Don’t compromise Global Fund principles when you develop the new funding model.”

Ms Mburu said that donors have advanced proposals for a new funding model that attack the core principle that real country expressions of demand for services should drive proposals – and that argue instead for an arbitrary allocation based on how much money is available at a given point in time. “We reject these proposals,” she said.

“An AIDS-free generation will not be achieved with a Global Fund that sets envelopes for countries and regions, [sets] arbitrary caps on country requests, or creates random lists of fundable interventions,” Ms Mburu said.

Ms Mburu spoke for about three minutes. Mr Jaramillo then began his talk. He said a few words at the outset that might have been directed at the protesters, though they could also have been directed to the audience in the hall. Mr Jaramillo said, “In my 18 months of navigating global health, I have met a lot of people but I have to say you are truly the best. You have made such a wonderful contribution to the world. Sometimes I think that you are not even conscious of [the magnitude of your contribution].”

Later in the session, after the presentation by Nadia Rafif, regional coordinator of the Civil Society Action Team for the Middle East and North Africa Region (and the only civil society representative on the panel), Ms Rafif invited representatives of the protestors onto the stage to ask some of the panel members to sign a pledge to uphold the demand-driven principles of the Global Fund. The precise wording of the pledge was as follows:

“Demand-driven pledge. At the International AIDS conference on 26th July, I commit as the world prepares to embark on a course to end AIDS and as the Global Fund reviews its grant-making model, that I will defend the demand-driven Global Fund, and oppose any measure that undermines scale-up, resource mobilization or universal access. In particular, I will oppose proposals to create ceilings or envelopes that cap countries’ ambition when applying to the Global Fund.”

The activists asked four people to sign the pledge: Mr Jaramillo; Eric Goosby, US AIDS Ambassador; Mireille Guigaz, Ambassador of France for the Fight Against HIV and Communicable Diseases – all presenters – and Rachel Ong, communications focal point for the Communities Delegation on the Global Fund Board, and co-moderator of the session. Mr Jaramillo, Ms Guigaz and Ms Ong all signed the pledge; Dr Goosby declined.

When GFO asked the (US) Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator why Dr Goosby had declined to sign the pledge, a spokesperson said that the US is working closely with other stakeholders to develop a new funding model in the spirit of the new Global Fund five-year strategy and the founding principles of the Fund. “These discussions are ongoing, and the US will join in the dialogue on all options raised in that forum... Ultimately, the US will work with the Global Fund and its stakeholders to adopt a new funding model that will ... save the most lives...”

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