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FORMER GLOBAL FUND BOARD MEMBERS URGE THE STRONG PLACEMENT OF PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN THE NEW STRATEGY

Background

In issue #399, we published an interview with Jorge Saveedra of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) ? [Pandemic response, preparedness and prevention: the pros and pros for the Global Fund](#). In that interview, Jorge argued that the Global Fund is the only international financial mechanism able to address pandemics and must continue to fight not just AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (HTM) or COVID-19 but any future pandemics.

At this year's [International AIDS Society](#) conference, which was held virtually between 28 to 21 July, AHF hosted a satellite session, Expansion of the Global Fund mandate: Pros and Pros. The panel of speakers explored the need for a new international treaty and framework on pandemic response, preparedness, and prevention. The speakers were experts in their field who are convinced that the Global Fund offers us the best financial mechanism to prevent, prepare, and respond to future pandemics and that no duplication is needed; they consider the Global Fund to be the most transparent and experienced international body fighting infectious diseases of pandemic proportions on a global scale.

Subsequently, the day after that conference closed, the panel session's experts wrote an open letter to the Global Fund Board which we have reproduced below.

It is unfortunate for them that the Extraordinary Board Meeting was held on 22 July and that the Board meeting had finished by the time their letter arrived. Of course, as we have seen with the proposed amendments to the draft Strategy Framework from the Global Fund Africa Board constituencies ? which

arrived after the deadline on the day before the Board meeting ? it is highly unlikely that the Board would have agreed to discuss the thorny issue of pandemic preparedness and response (PPR) as it had not been tabled in time.

The topic of PPR, and its placement (if at all) in the Strategy Framework, has been an extremely contentious issue. Nonetheless, although the Strategy Framework has now been voted on and endorsed, there is still ample time to influence the Strategy Narrative, as stakeholders have until 10 September to share their inputs into the draft Narrative. Thus, Jorge and his colleagues will still be able to argue their corner.

Letter of 22 July 2021 to the Global Fund Board on the issue of PPR

Board of Directors of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Chemin du Pommier 40, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex, Switzerland

Re: Future Role of the Global Fund in Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response

Dear Board Members and Alternate Board Members of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

We, the signatories of this letter, have participated, and in some instances continue to participate, in the structures and functions of the Global Fund Board. In anticipation of a Board meeting on the new Strategy Framework for the Global Fund, we would like to express the following seven points.

1. On Sunday 18 July 2021, we participated in a virtual panel called 'The Expansion of the Mandate of the Global Fund, Pros & Pros' at the International AIDS Society Conference. While we are of course aware of potential 'cons' associated with the expansion of the Global Fund to cover key aspects of the pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, we are convinced that there are many more advantages to this approach during the ongoing and escalating crisis of COVID-19.
2. The Global Fund has extensive experience in responding to AIDS, TB, and malaria ? three infectious diseases with pandemic dimensions. It also has a strong performance track record as a financial mechanism that incentivizes countries to co-finance the response to these diseases
3. The Global Fund has been consistently evaluated as one of the most transparent international organizations in the world.
4. Unlike many other development organizations, the Global Fund involves a wide range of stakeholders, including donors, communities, governments, civil society, the private sector, and technical partners.
5. We urge you to consider the possibilities of expanding the mandate of the Global Fund to share its expertise and receive increased funding to prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19 and other potential pandemics. We do not ask the Global Fund to forgo its original mission to fight to end AIDS, TB and malaria, but instead to build upon this proven model to address new pandemics.
6. There are already voices emerging in the global public health sphere that are recommending the creation of a new fund for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. We believe that this is not necessary because existing, successful bodies like the Global Fund can be strengthened and adapted to the new realities of global health security and equity.
7. We call upon the Board of the Global Fund to consider the possibility that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria can contribute and incentivize the pandemic response in developing countries which have already lost millions of lives. It can receive and administer new funding and serve as a vital financial mechanism during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and other future pandemics.

We thank you for considering our appeal and are available to brief you in greater detail about the seven

points outlined in this letter. Should you have any inquiries, please reach out to Dr. Jorge Saavedra, who is the point of contact for the signatories, at jorge.saavedra@aidhealth.org or via phone at +1 323 420 5493.

Sincerely,

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