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ADVOCACY BRIEF FOR UN HIGH LEVEL MEETING SAYS THE GLOBAL FUND AND KEY POPULATIONS ARE DELIVERING RESULTS

The Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) has released an [advocacy brief](#) aimed at stakeholders who are involved in the [2016 High Level Meeting on Ending AIDS](#). The meeting is taking place this week, from 8-10 June in New York, where country delegations from around the world will adopt a new Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.

The brief is an advance summary of a forthcoming publication by the Global Fund Advocates Network and [ICASO](#), in partnership with the [Free Space Process](#), which examines the evidence around the vital role that key populations and vulnerable communities play in advancing results through Global Fund investments.

The paper has five overarching advocacy messages which impress upon the need for a fully-funded Global Fund:

1. Investment in key populations is needed now more than ever.

The brief begins by stating that investment in key and vulnerable populations is a fundamental factor to ending AIDS, TB, and malaria. It asserts that without scaled-up, evidence-based programs for those most marginalized and vulnerable, it will not be possible to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), nor the goals set out in the UNAIDS Strategy 2016-2021, the Stop TB Partnership Strategy 2016-2020, and the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030. Though the following information is not contained in the brief: A recently published paper on what is required to end AIDS by 2030 (see [Stover et al., 2016](#)) shows that resource needs are concentrated in just a few areas. Two-thirds of what is needed

is for just four interventions, one of which is services for key populations (9%). The remaining three are ART (39%), program enablers (10%), and condoms (7%).

2. The Global Fund invests in rights- and evidence-based interventions for key and vulnerable populations.

Preliminary results from an ongoing resource tracking initiative led by the Community, Rights, and Gender (CRG) department at the Global Fund Secretariat indicate that approximately one in 10 dollars (in USD) of all funds allocated to HIV and joint HIV/TB programs has been directed towards programs for key populations. However, the brief cautions that this amount varies depending on a country's willingness or ability to prioritize these investments in funding requests.

3. The Global Fund plays a catalytic role in improving national responses and leveraging domestic financing for key and vulnerable populations.

The brief boldly argues that no other agency is as effective as The Global Fund in leveraging additional investments and technical support to catalyze scale-up of high quality interventions for key populations. It provides the example of Costa Rica, where The Global Fund has leveraged a \$11.2 million commitment from government towards a social protection board funding mechanism for local HIV NGOs to specifically prioritize support for organizations serving MSM and transgender women. The brief also cites a case study from Botswana, where strategic litigation supported by The Global Fund led to a ruling that the government must provide free antiretroviral therapy to non-citizen prisoners.

4. The Global Fund amplifies the voices and leadership of key and vulnerable populations.

For this section, the brief shares some powerful testimonials from key populations themselves. EriKa Castellanos, a transgender woman living with HIV says, "Having the Global Fund in Belize has meant that the voices of key populations are being taken into account through the Belize country coordinating mechanism (CCM). This platform allows debate for the first time of some of the drivers of the epidemic." Castellanos is the Executive Director of the Collaborative Network for Persons Living with HIV (CNET+) in Belize and a Global Fund champion as a member of the GFAN Speakers Bureau.

The views of Peninah Mwangi, a CCM member representing sex workers in Kenya, are also shared. "The Global Fund has empowered communities," she says. "The implication of trusting and directly supporting communities to run a program as sub-recipients is huge. Owning the epidemic has been taken literally, with positive response. We plan, strategize, and invent at a community level to ensure that we achieve our targets and impact our communities."

5. The Global Fund places key populations at the heart of its work, providing a "package" of supportive strategies, policies, and processes.

Lastly, the brief emphasizes that The Global Fund does not just talk about the importance of key and vulnerable populations, but also concretely demonstrates its commitment to these groups through a comprehensive package of strategies, policies, and processes. The brief makes mention of the Global Fund's \$15 million CRG Special Initiative, which delivers quality peer-led technical assistance to improve gender and human rights elements in country dialogue, concept notes, and grant negotiations. The CRG SI has also supported long-term mentorship to national key populations networks through a partnership with the Robert Carr Networks Fund, and ensured access to information and linkage to further support through the initiative's six regional platforms for communication and coordination.

"This research, brief, and upcoming paper were in part developed to push back on the overall exclusion of these communities within the response: something that civil society has to fight again at this week's UN High Level Meeting on AIDS," says Peter van Rooijen, Executive Director of International Civil Society

Support (ICSS), host of the GFAN Secretariat. “As we move forward to the 5th Replenishment of The Global Fund this September in Canada, all governments and donors should increase their support to the Fund which places key and vulnerable populations at the heart of the response.”

Note: GFO will report on the full publication from GFAN, ICASO and the Free Space Process when it is released in the coming weeks.

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