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Global Fund's CCM Manager Expresses Disappointment with GFO Commentaries on CCMs -

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Editor's note: On 13 May 2011, in GFO 146, we ran a [Commentary](#) by Aidspan's David Garmaise entitled "New CCM Guidelines Fall Far Short of What Was Expected and What Had Been Proposed." Then on 18 July 2011, in GFO 153, we ran another [Commentary](#) by Garmaise, entitled "Let's be Creative About Solving the Problems of CCMs."

On 30 August 2011 we received the following Letter to the Editor from David Winters of the Global Fund.

Aidspan plays an important role as an objective critic of the Global Fund. Thus, I read with some disappointment David Garmaise's articles in GFO Issues 146 and 153 characterizing the revised CCM Guidelines as having "no teeth" and the Secretariat's approach to CCM funding and performance monitoring as "piece meal." Through this letter, I would like to offer a different viewpoint and clarify some facts.

1. CCM Guidelines. Characterizing the revised CCM Guidelines as "watered down" or "gutted" misrepresents the significant gains that were made. The three-tiered approach to the Guidelines was developed with two intentions in mind: (1) to articulate a new set of expectations for CCM performance based upon best practice and (2) to provide the Board with future flexibilities for moving between the gradients of requirements, standards and recommendations as experience would dictate. While compromises were made, it is incorrect to assume that delinking standards from CCM funding will neutralize their importance. The new Guidelines, as their name indicates, give vastly improved guidance. We recognize that not everyone was pleased with the final outcome, but real triumphs were achieved and

the guidelines are stronger as a result.

2. CCM Performance Framework. What is labelled a piecemeal approach to CCM monitoring is actually a conscious effort to lay the foundations for the “holistic” approach Mr. Garmaise calls for: CCMs can’t adequately move forward without financial resources to conduct their core business and the GF Secretariat is limited to improve CCM capacities if there isn’t a rational basis upon which to direct support (i.e., the need for a performance framework). CCMs would be hard pressed to conduct a “gap analysis” without first establishing the capacity to collect and monitor relevant data. In direct consultation with CCMs, the Secretariat is now designing the very performance framework that will be used to globally monitor their progress. The standards that apparently “have no teeth” will, in fact, form the basis of information upon which CCMs will be appraised. NGO and communities delegations would be wise to follow these new standards closely and, based upon data collected and posted by the Secretariat, monitor CCM compliance closely. We continue to strongly encourage and welcome all CCMs to use self-assessment tools that are available online.

3. CCM Funding. In brief, there has been a gradual increase in demand-based funding since the Board lifted the ceiling and introduced a more flexible, performance-based model in 2010. Although the sharp uptake in demand projected for 2010 did not materialize, the actual figure disbursed was \$4.6 million out of \$6.9 million budgeted – not \$1.5 million as quoted. Since July 2011 we have already committed \$4 million at mid-year from the projected \$12.4 million – in other words, we’re near our target. We believe the slower-than-anticipated uptake reflects (1) CCMs taking time to familiarize themselves with the new policy, and (2) low capacity to do the requisite work planning. We believe the positive uptake in demand for 2011 is a result of the GF Secretariat having conducted, since mid-2010, seven regional CCM meetings and six smaller trainings with CCM Secretariats to teach CCMs how to access performance-based funding. This year alone, 29 CCMs have submitted clear governance-focused work plans. Fourteen did so last year. In total, we expect to be funding 100 out of 130 CCMs in 2011 – half of whom are switching to performance-based funding. This is progress. Few, if any, other voluntary, board-like coordinating mechanisms can claim performance-based governance.

To conclude, I read the GFO regularly because it is important that we listen to those who challenge us to do better. The CCM is often the object of complaint because of its inherently polemic and dialectic nature. It’s important to get the story right and I hope, in the future, that the GFO will shed better light on CCMs’ objective strengths and weaknesses.

David Winters (david.winters@theglobalfund.org) is the Global Fund’s CCM Manager.

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David Garmaise responds as follows:

I am quite happy to see these issues being debated, so I welcome the letter in which David Winters responds to two GFO commentaries that I wrote. One of the commentaries was about the process to revise the CCM guidelines and about the final text of the guidelines. The other was about improving the performance of CCMs. Let me deal with each one in turn.

CCM guidelines

I agree with David Winters that the new CCM Guidelines are an improvement over the old ones. In my commentary, I did not try to compare the two. Rather, I wrote about the changes that were made to the wording of the guidelines between the version that was submitted to the Global Fund Board in December 2010 (and not adopted) and the version that was ultimately adopted by the Board in May 2011. It was in this context that I wrote about the guidelines having been “watered down.” I said that a specific clause in

the draft guidelines had been “guttled.”

This is what I was referring to: Under the version submitted to the board in December 2010, the Secretariat would monitor implementation of the standards in the guidelines; CCMs that did not follow the standards would be asked to explain why; and “broad or persistent” failure to follow the standards “without justification” could “negatively affect access to funding.” In the final version, this was changed to “While neither standards nor recommendations represent conditions for Global Fund program financing, these will be used by the Global Fund to form the basis of information to appraise overall CCM performance.” I think that it is quite fair to say that the original clause was gutted in the final version.

CCM performance

David Winters objects to my having labelled the Global Fund’s approach to improving CCM performance as “piece meal.” What I see is an approach that has not been fully thought out and planned. What David Winters sees is a conscious effort to lay the foundations for the holistic approach I was advocating. I don’t think that we are very far apart. Perhaps this is a case of two Davids looking at the same glass of water, which David Winters sees as being half-full, and which David Garmaise sees as being half-empty.

I hope that the performance framework currently being developed by the Global Fund Secretariat will turn out to be a useful tool to monitor how well CCMs are doing.

Finally, David Winters said that, in 2010, of the \$6.9 million CCM Funding budget, \$4.6 million was spent – not \$1.5 million as I wrote in the second commentary. I accept the correction; we should have checked this before publishing it.

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