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POLICY, ADVISORY, AND ADVOCACY COUNCIL ESTABLISHED TO ASSIST GEORGIA CCM WITH ITS TRANSITION

In March 2016, Georgia's country coordinating mechanism established a policy, advisory, and advocacy council (PAAC) to assist the CCM with the transition of TB and HIV programs from The Global Fund to domestic resources. The terms of the reference of the PAAC, including its role, composition, and members' responsibilities, were approved by the general assembly of the CCM.

The specific responsibilities of the PAAC are as follows:

- review and advise on the draft TOR for the transition plan developed by the principal recipient, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health;
- identify needs for technical assistance during the transition planning process;
- arrange for the TA to be provided;
- work closely with all parties involved in development and implementation of the transition plan;
- provide technical expertise as needed; and
- verify that all activities related to HIV and TB programs in the country are aligned, complement each other and use resources in most efficient and effective ways.

The PAAC is not a decision-making body. Rather, it will provide technical and operational support during the development and implementation of the transition plan. The support will focus on the following areas:

- making sure that the transition process fits into the national fiscal cycle;
- advocating for an improved legislative and regulatory environment that will better support the provision of the effective prevention and treatment services;
- developing and promoting mechanisms to ensure increased involvement of the affected

- communities and civil society organizations at all level of the planning and decision-making; and
- developing procurement and supply regulations so that essential medicines and supplies for HIV and TB programs will be available at all times.

There are 16 persons on the PAAC having different technical expertise and representing various sectors, including communities, CSOs, local and international NGOs, various government ministries of health, the National AIDS center, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, the National Center for Tuberculosis Control, and the Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction.

The PAAC has a dedicated policy and advocacy specialist, hired by the CCM and supervised by the Chair of the PAAC, Nino Berdzuli, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs. The specialist provides technical and logistical support to the PAAC.

The PAAC is already fully operational and has conducted two meetings. Currently it is reviewing the first outline of the transition plan which is being developed by a local NGO, Curatio International Foundation.

Tamar Gabunia, Vice-Chair of the CCM, told GFO that “transition from donor to domestic funding is a complex process that requires significant efforts of all stakeholders in order to be successful. The PAAC is established as a mechanism for facilitating effective policy changes aimed at long-term sustainability of TB and HIV programs. We believe that the PAAC will come up with evidence-based and country-specific solutions to guarantee universal access to high-quality services to all key affected populations in need.”

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