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of the Global Fund

Africa Bureau one step closer to fruition after 31st Board meeting

Representatives from African implementing countries took a step closer in March towards the inauguration of a regional bureau that will help coordinate and harmonize communications on the continent in order to be better positioned to influence decision-making by the Global Fund Board.

Meeting on the sidelines of the 31st Board meeting, held 6-7 March in Jakarta, the assembled government representatives from East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa agreed to formally call for expressions of interest from countries willing to host the bureau and establish a secretariat.

The seeds for an Africa Bureau within the Global Fund Board were planted during a 2012 meeting between the above representatives who saw that their voices, despite being represented as individual constituencies on the 20-member Board, were being lost when it came time for decisions to be made.

“We sought to strengthen our ability to be better and more effective representatives to the Global Fund board,” said Ida Hakizinka, the communication focal point for the ESA representatives and coordinator to the Rwanda country coordinating mechanism (CCM). “We needed to be better coordinated and knowledgeable to shape the policies and processes there.”

Under the terms of the country allocations announced on 12 March, African countries will receive the bulk of the \$14.82 billion allocated during the 2014-2016 period. In total, sub-Saharan Africa will implement 64.3% of the money available: some \$9.53 billion.

Once established, the Africa Bureau will work to enhance the visibility of the regional constituencies within the Board to ensure they are both present and prominent in decision-making. The Bureau will also focus on cross-cutting issues affecting the management, implementation and reporting on Global Fund grants to African countries.

The two delegations developed a governance framework for the future Bureau, for how it would serve as a central focal point for all communication, advocacy and future engagement on the Global Fund Board for the relevant constituencies.

“This framework defines how we, the Global Fund board members in these regions, our alternates and the communication focal persons, are selected and our competencies assessed,” Hakizinka said. “It also highlights our roles and responsibilities and how the bureau will be governed.”

African ministries of health have adopted the framework, which has also earned support from other voting blocs on the Board including other implementing blocs, the Developing Country NGO constituency and the Communities delegation. A task force led by Hakizinka is continuing work within the Board context to make the Bureau a reality.

Progress towards the installation of the Bureau has stalled, however, due to a lack of resources. There have also been few expressions of interest from countries willing to host its secretariat. Those gathered in Jakarta in early March have sought to use this formal call for expressions of interest to reinvigorate interest in the Africa Hub as soon as possible. Applicants have until 25 March to signal their interest.

“The Bureau will be a valuable vehicle for assessment by African implementers of processes including the [new funding model],” said Hakizinka.

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