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THE GLOBAL FUND IS ALIVE AND WELL, BUT GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRESS IS IN PERIL

By Simon Bland, Chair, Global Fund Board

This article is reprinted in its entirety from Mr Bland's statement on the Global Fund website.

The rumors of The Global Fund's demise are greatly exaggerated. At its last meeting, the Global Fund Board acted responsibly to transition to a new, more strategic approach to grant making that will begin in 2014. To make a few things crystal clear:

- The Global Fund will disburse around \$10 billion in our current funding period, (2011-2013); \$2billion more than what it disbursed between 2008 and 2010. This includes disbursing money to new, ambitious programs. Efficiencies we have achieved in the past three funding rounds and in other areas will allow several countries to increase the number of patients receiving AIDS or tuberculosis treatment. So more people – not less – will be given access to treatment in the coming two years.
- With the exception of one smaller country which has reduced its pledge by a few million dollars, all donors who made pledges for the 2011-2013 period have kept them and have signaled that they are continuing to strive to pay in their pledges in full.
- The Global Fund has disbursed well over \$14 billion to more than a thousand grants in 150 countries during the 10 years it has been in existence. The vast majority of grants have delivered important results, helping to save millions of lives.

But, yes, there are concerns and resources are limited. The Global Fund had originally hoped to have nearly \$12 billion available for this three-year period. We are living in uncertain economic times and budgets are strapped. It would have been irresponsible to continue promising opportunities for additional funding when we are not sure we will have the money needed.

Over the next year we will transform the way we make and manage grants to make sure all the money is spent as efficiently as possible to deliver the maximum health impact in the countries and for the people who need it the most. We will reassure donors that their money is safe and is invested as efficiently and effectively as humanly possible through the Global Fund. In so doing we will strengthen the confidence in the Global Fund. We will continue our strong efforts to mobilize as many resources as possible.

As overall development aid to fight HIV and AIDS has reduced since 2009, and many ministries of health and non-governmental organizations have been looking to the Global Fund to offset some of this decline, we are aware of the heavy responsibility weighing on the Global Fund.

We will speak tirelessly about the need to invest in global health: to continue the progress towards ending deaths from malaria, controlling TB and AIDS and dramatically reducing the number of people who die from these diseases. We will appeal to new fast-growing world powers to take on their part of the responsibility to finance this fight. And we will demonstrate again and again that the Global Fund is changing to continue this fight for the next decade.

Many countries have counted on this extra funding opportunity to do their part in achieving the global health goals the world aspires to by 2015. The fight does not stand still: we either win this fight or we lose it. Hundreds of millions of bed nets are protecting nearly half of Africa's children against malaria, but every three or four years they must be replaced. Doctors and nurses around the world have been able to reassure the millions who do not yet have access to AIDS or multi-drug resistant TB treatment that the queues are getting shorter. What if they get longer again?

The Global Fund has set as a goal to help save 10 million lives between today and 2016. The postponement of new funding is a setback to that goal. But with a successful transformation responding to the recommendations of the High Level Panel, and with the help of our donors, this goal is still achievable.

This article appears on the Global Fund website [here](#).

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