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of the Global Fund

REPORT DOCUMENTS CHALLENGES FACING APPLICANTS AND IMPLEMENTERS

Despite the fact that many agencies are providing technical assistance (TA) in the region, countries in South-East Asia face a wide range of significant challenges in applying for and implementing Global Fund grants. Some of the challenges originate from Global Fund processes and systems. Others are specific to individual countries.

These are the main findings of a report prepared by the South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The report, “South-East Asia Region Country Experiences in Global Fund Implementation and Impact of WHO Support: A Review and Assessment,” was released in April 2008, but came to Aidspan’s attention only recently.

The WHO defines South-East Asia as including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. All but North Korea and Myanmar participated in a survey conducted by SEARO. The report is based on the results of the survey.

In each country, a survey questionnaire was completed by personnel from WHO country offices, CCM chairs, PRs and country or Ministry of Health “focal points.”

People from seven of the nine countries surveyed said that the Global Fund’s forms were difficult to fill out. Some of the adjectives used to describe the forms were “overly complex,” “labour-intensive” and “time-consuming.” Many people complained that Global Fund requirements are constantly changing.

Most of the people surveyed said that communication and collaboration with local fund agents (LFAs)

have been difficult, due to LFAs' "limited understanding of programmatic realities."

With respect to challenges that originate in-country, survey respondents cited a lack of capacity in a number of project management areas, notably proposal development, workplan development, reporting, data analysis, and management. Respondents also said that PRs and SRs often lack expertise in key technical areas, such as procurement and supply management, development of treatment guidelines, and human resources training.

The WHO has been providing TA in a number of areas, including proposal writing, advocacy and negotiation, grant implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and preparing for Phase 2 renewal. Survey respondents were generally satisfied with the TA provided, particularly in the areas of proposal development and Phase 2 renewal.

"South-East Asia Region Country Experiences in Global Fund Implementation and Impact of WHO Support: A Review and Assessment," is available at www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/CDS_HTM-01.pdf.

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