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BOARD ENTERS SECOND PHASE OF GOVERNANCE REFORM

Focus will be on improving participation of implementing countries

Roles of partners, TRP, OIG to be reviewed

The Global Fund Board is embarking on Phase 2 of its governance reform project. This phase will focus on strengthening communications and enhancing participation from implementing countries.

In Phase 1, the role of the Board was clarified; the committee structure was revised; coordination between the Board and its committees was strengthened; and minimum standards and competencies were established for participation on the Board and its committees.

A paper on governance reform prepared for the last Board meeting identified several factors that negatively affect the ability of implementing countries to engage fully in the work of the Board. These include the following:

- the large number of countries represented by each implementing country Board delegation;
- constituency processes to select representatives that are often unclear, undocumented or misunderstood;
- high turnover of Board members and alternates, as people move in and out of senior government positions;
- barriers related to time availability, language fluency, and access to necessary technology or support; and
- Board documents that are unnecessarily complex and long.

The focus in Phase 2 is on coming up with a clear strategy to mitigate these factors and bring about

broader engagement from implementing countries. As part of this strategy, the Board will be asked to consider how the Partnership Forum can be used more strategically in the governance framework of the Global Fund, thus relieving the Board from having to fulfil many competing objectives. (The Partnership Forum, which is a formal part of the Global Fund's governance structure, is an ongoing forum for consultation between the Fund and its stakeholders, culminating in a meeting every 24-30 months. Each meeting is held in a different region of the world.)

In Phase 2, the Board will also review the role of partners in the context of the new Board structure, to evaluate how their expertise can be more effectively incorporated into Board and committee discussions and decision-making. In addition, the role of advisory committees such as the Technical Review Panel and the mandate of the Office of the Inspector General will be reviewed.

Another priority for Phase 2 is to improve internal communications between Board meetings. To this end, the chairs and vice-chairs of Board committees have started to prepare and share summaries of the deliberations of the committees. Phase 2 will also consider new ways that the committees can draw on inputs from non-committee members in their deliberations.

It is expected that Phase 2 will include discussions about the Board's meeting model, including the use of, and processes for, executive sessions. The Global Fund said that the feedback it has received so far indicates that the Board "must move from being a Board of representatives towards operating as a Board of Directors" with a clear mandate and the ability to make strategic decisions.

In addition, Phase 2 will include discussions on how Board communicates with outside stakeholders and how, in future, the Board "can communicate more cohesively as 'one institution'."

The Phase 2 discussions will be undertaken by topic and theme, and will involve different levels of engagement. In preparation for the discussions, governance focal points have been identified for each Board delegation. Together with the Chair and Vice-Chair, this group will lead the Phase 2 process. The focal points will be expected to take part in conversations facilitated by the Chair and Vice-Chair. Before each consultation (verbal, or by email), the focal points will seek inputs from their constituencies, and then share information within their constituency on the discussion, the next steps, and any new input that is needed.

The Global Fund said that, as in Phase 1, all consultations are intended to be highly interactive, "and will only lead to successful outcomes if there has been broad engagement across a constituency's membership in advance."

The Board paper contains proposed time frames for the discussions on the various topics. The paper stated that "it may be appropriate to aim for Phase 2 decisions at the November 2012 Board meeting, and if needed, at the May 2013 Board meeting."

The paper prepared for the Board (Document GF-B26-11) should be available shortly at www.theglobalfund.org/en/board/meetings/twentysixth.

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