



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

ERROR-FILLED MEDIA STORIES ARE ANOTHER RISK THE GLOBAL FUND NEEDS TO MANAGE

Earlier this week, Reuters published a [story](#) about the Global Fund that represented terrible journalism. I won't take up space here listing the smaller errors. The most serious error was the sentence that represented the heart of the story, in which Reuters in effect accused the Global Fund of corruption:

“[General Manager Gabriel] Jaramillo took over [earlier this year] after an investigation found a ‘grave misuse of funds’ at the fund.” [Emphasis added.]

Not true. The quote “grave misuse of funds” was from a press release issued by the Global Fund itself, a year before Mr Jaramillo arrived. What the Global Fund said in January 2011 was:

“In its report last year, the Global Fund’s Inspector General listed grave misuse of funds in four of the 145 countries which receive grants from the Global Fund.” [Emphasis added.]

That is very different.

The Reuters story went on to say:

“The revelation prompted governments such as Sweden and Germany to freeze their contributions, forcing the fund to scrap new grants until 2014.”

Not true. The freezing of contributions by those governments was temporary, and was lifted after a few months. The freezing was not a factor in the Fund’s decision ten months later to scrap new grants until 2014.

In recent months, the Global Fund has rightly placed a huge emphasis on risk-management. One of the largest risks that the Fund faces is that an error-filled story like the Reuters one will start to spread like wildfire – or at least will be read by some key donors – just as happened with the January 2011 Associated Press (AP) story with its misleading title “Fraud Plagues Global Health Fund.”

When, by nineteen hours after the error-filled Reuters story appeared, the Global Fund had done nothing about it – no complaint to Reuters, no press release, nothing – Aidspace contacted Reuters, pointing out the errors. Reuters then issued a [corrected version](#) of its story.

Come on, Global Fund. Get your act together. Sure, Reuters did a terrible job, but you let them get away with it. This stuff matters.

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