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SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN DELEGATIONS TO THE GLOBAL FUND BOARD INTRODUCE MAJOR REFORMS

The two sub-Saharan African constituencies on the Global Fund Board have made significant changes to the way their Board representatives are selected and how the constituencies operate. These changes were made at a consultation meeting of two constituencies on 9–11 July in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting was convened by Dr Mphu Ramatlapeng, Vice-Chair of the Global Fund Board, and former Minister of Health of Lesotho.

About 60 people from 30 African countries attended the meeting, including some ministers of health. They were joined by representatives of the Global Fund Secretariat, multilateral agencies and civil society. An Ad Hoc Working Group spent several months preparing concept papers and other essential documentation before the meeting.

The most significant changes involve the adoption of a selection process based on competency and the establishment of a form of secretariat to provide support to the constituencies.

Sub-Saharan Africa has two of the seven Board seats set aside for governments of implementing countries. The constituency for one of the seats is the 19 countries of West and Central Africa; and for the other, the 22 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. Each constituency can name a Board member, an alternate Board member and up to eight additional persons to participate in its delegation. One of the delegation members serves as a communications focal point.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify ways to improve sub-Saharan Africa's engagement with the Global Fund Board and increase the continent's impact on Board decision-making.

The changes were made because the two constituencies considered that they currently have only minimal influence on the decisions of the Global Fund Board. They attribute this to ineffective representation caused, in part, by the fact that up to now the representatives have not been selected on the basis of competency. Instead, each delegation's representation has been based on an alphabetical rotation among the countries in the constituency. As a result, often the representatives have limited knowledge or experience with the Global Fund and are unable to participate meaningfully at Board meetings.

In addition, the two constituencies believed that communications between the Board delegations and the countries they represented was inadequate.

The constituencies decided that the process to select their constituency representatives (i.e. Board members, alternates, communications focal point and other delegation members) will involve a transparent call for nominations, preparation of a short list by a screening panel, and a final vote by the governments of the countries making up the constituency. Terms of reference (TORs) will be developed for each constituency representative role, setting out minimum requirements with respect to technical competence, experience and time availability. The TORs will include performance indicators.

A single "bureau" will be established to provide support for both constituencies. Each constituency will appoint a constituency focal point. The two focal points will work together in the bureau. In future, the bureau may have additional staff resources.

The two constituencies agreed on the following additional changes:

- Representatives will serve for two years but cannot serve for two consecutive terms. They will be eligible to be considered again after "sitting out" for two years.
- Board members and alternates will be from different sub-regions. For example, if the Board member for the Eastern and Southern Africa constituency is from Eastern Africa, the alternate will be from Southern Africa.
- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be developed for each constituency. Among other things, the SOPs will describe the process for evaluating constituency representatives and actions that can be taken in the event of weak performance.
- Constituency positions will be developed by broad consultation prior to each meeting of the Global Fund Board and its committees. Whenever possible, this will involve an in-person meeting, and could involve joint meetings between the two constituencies to discuss areas of common ground.
- Each country in a constituency will identify a country focal point. This person will ensure that relevant information is broadly disseminated within the country, and that feedback is provided to the constituency representatives.

The constituencies decided that a resource mobilisation plan will be developed to support the changes in the way the constituencies will function.

"This was an excellent meeting," said Dr Mphu Ramatlapeng. "It was the first time that the two African constituencies came together to discuss their representation within Global Fund governance structures. They made some important decisions on how they will select representatives and support them with good analysis and a consultative process so that they can come to Board and Committee meetings and represent the views of the countries in their constituencies clearly and accurately."

The changes made by the two sub-Saharan African constituencies are considered to be an important element of the Global Fund governance reform process currently under way.

For more information on the outcomes of the consultation meeting, contact Rangarirai Chiteure, Coordinator of the Zimbabwe CCM Secretariat ([email](#)).

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