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GLOBAL FUND BOARD APPOINTS AIDA KURTOVI? AS CHAIR, AND AMBASSADOR JOHN SIMON AS VICE-CHAIR

At its 37th meeting on 3-4 May in Kigali, Rwanda, the Global Fund Board appointed Aida Kurtovi? as Chair of the Board and Ambassador John Simon as Vice-Chair of the Board, each to serve a two-year term. Their terms started when the 37th meeting adjourned.

Kurtovi? is the outgoing Vice-Chair of the Board. Her term as Vice-Chair, and the term of the outgoing Chair of the Board, Norbert Hauser, expired at the end of the Board's 37th meeting.

The implementer bloc nominated Kurtovi? for the position of chair, and the donor bloc nominated Ambassador Simon for the position of vice-chair. This is in keeping with the practice of having the positions alternate every two years between individuals who originate from, and bring the experience of, the implementer and donor blocs. The outgoing Chair, Hauser, originated from the donor bloc.

Both the implementer and donor blocs designed their own processes for coming up with a nomination.

Aida Kurtovi? has worked in the Global Fund universe in several capacities. In addition to serving as Vice-Chair of the Board from May 2015 until the present, Kurtovi? was a Board member representing Eastern Europe and Central Asia from May 2012 to April 2014. Before that, she was a member of the EECA delegation to the Board. Kurtovi? has also served on Board committees. In addition, she was at one time a member of the Bosnia Country Coordinating Mechanism.

Since 2009, Kurtovi? has been Executive Director of Partnerships in Health, an organization in Sarajevo whose mission is assisting institutions to build capacity and achieve sustainable improvements in the quality of basic and essential health services, changing the lives of vulnerable populations.

The two candidates were asked to prepare “motivation letters” in support of their candidacies. In her motivation letter, Kurtovi? said that internal changes within the Fund, as well as massive shifts in its political context, underline the importance of being able to adjust to rapidly changing environments. “We cannot stop the change; we can only try to shape it, and adjust accordingly,” she said.

Kurtovi? said that her priorities for her term as Chair “are further strengthening of the Board, strengthening the impact and sustainability of response to three diseases, strengthening the health and community systems, while focusing on the human rights, gender and key affected populations.”

Kurtovi? said that she has an “uncompromising belief that by practicing a common set of values – integrity, respect, passion, collaboration and effectiveness – we can together change the course of the three diseases, strengthen health and community systems, alleviate suffering and save lives. The Global Fund investments to combat HIV, TB and malaria are investments in a better world. [This] is my aspiration.”

According to the website of [Total Impact Capital](#), where he currently works, Simon held a variety of jobs in the U.S. federal government over the years, including Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Relief, Stabilization, and Development for the National Security Council (NSC) at the White House. During his tenure at the NSC, Simon oversaw the implementation of several ground-breaking development initiatives, including PEPFAR (the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), PMI (the President’s Malaria Initiative), the Millennium Challenge Account, and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

More recently, Simon was the U.S Ambassador to the African Union, and the Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). At OPIC, Simon led the Agency’s effort to develop a series of social development funds for Africa.

Simon is currently a founding partner of TOTAL Impact Capital, which specializes in sourcing and developing private investment opportunities that are socially and financially attractive.

In his motivation letter, Ambassador Simon said that he intends to use his knowledge and experience to be an effective advocate for the Global Fund. He said that was particularly motivated by the opportunity “to work with the world’s leading organization combatting diseases I have spent much of my career fighting, and one that has had such a positive impact in this effort.”

“I recognize that our focus must always be on the people across the world who need our support,” Ambassador Simon said, “and to ensure that their concerns and voice receive the needed attention and consideration through the Board agenda we advance.”

According to the revised terms of reference (TORs) for the chair and vice-chair positions, which the Board adopted at its meeting on 3-4 May, the chair and the vice-chair will, between them, clearly define which responsibilities within the TORs will be carried by the Chair and which responsibilities will be delegated to the Vice-Chair.

However, the revised TORs make it clear that the Board chair takes the lead in ensuring that the Board Leadership fulfils its obligations, and that the Board chair is the spokesperson for the Global Fund in terms of resource mobilisation and other advocacy matters.

Aidspan comment:

This is a win-win situation for the Board and for the Global Fund. Ms Kurtovi? brings experience and continuity. Mr Simon has a high profile in the United States, which should be an asset in persuading the current U.S. administration not to cut its contribution to the Global Fund. The U.S. is by far the Fund's largest donor.

“Appointment of Board Chair and Vice-Chair,” Document, GF-B37-08, should be available shortly at www.theglobalfund.org/en/board/meetings/37.

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