



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

A POLICY AND A STRATEGY ON TRANSITIONS ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED

There was no agenda item on transition at the Board meeting on 16-17 November, but the topic was much discussed at the Board table and in the corridors. There were calls for clear strategies on transition, for the development of a transition road map, and for transition to be moved up to the top of the Board agenda. It was noted that there is no key performance indicator on transition.

In his report to the Board, Executive Director Mark Dybul said that “in development work, including global health, there have been a lot exits but not many successful transitions.”

It's not as if nothing is happening on transition. Thailand has declared that it will voluntarily transition away from Global Fund support by the end of 2016. Other countries have been involuntarily transitioning because they became ineligible for Global Fund support as they moved up the income ladder or as the Fund tightened its eligibility criteria.

GFO has learned that when they were given their allocations for 2014-2016, several countries were told that their grants were “transition grants” and so they should plan accordingly.

What's missing in all this is a policy and a strategy on transitions from the Global Fund. What is the Fund's role in transition planning? What is the role of the technical partners? How will country stakeholders, including civil society organizations, be involved? When should the planning start? Who should coordinate the process? How much time is required?

What has to happen to ensure that key affected populations, particularly those that are marginalized or even criminalized, aren't left behind when the Global Fund pulls out of a country? Is the Fund prepared to

fund NGOs directly to provide services to KAPs that the government is not providing or refuses to provide? Will the Fund do so even in countries where it is no longer providing any funding to governments?

Will the strategy include persuading governments to fund NGOs directly to provide services to KAPs? What role will the Global Fund play— both before and after the countries become ineligible for Fund support – in advocating for changes in laws that criminalize certain populations?

Aidspace was told that the Secretariat can't answer these questions yet because it is waiting for guidance on the Fund's role in transitions from the new 2017-2022 Strategy. The Strategy won't be approved until the next in-person Board meeting on 27-28 April 2016. Well, everybody knows that transitions will figure prominently in the new Strategy. If you have any doubt about that: "Support sustainable responses for epidemic control and successful transitions" is one of the broad activities in the Strategy Framework adopted at the Board meeting on 16-17 November.

The Secretariat and the Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee should be working on a transition policy and strategy in parallel with the work they are doing on the new Strategy. That way, we can at least have a draft transition policy and strategy ready for the next Board meeting. Extensive consultations should start now.

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