



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

The 52nd Global Fund Board Meeting

Lilongwe, Malawi 19-22, November 2024

Malawi. Will it be a Milestone in the history of the Global Fund?



The world of dew is the world of dew... And yet...and yet...
- Kobayashi Issa

Our deepest condolences to the family and friends of DR FAUSTINE ENGELBERT NDIUGUILE, microbiologist, former Member of Parliament for Kigamboni, Tanzania, and recently selected Regional Director, WHO African Region who passed away at the age of just fifty-five.

May his soul rest in peace.

Malawi. Will it mark a milestone in the history of the Global Fund? Because it's just six years now from the Sustainable Goals 2030 deadline. And what the picture will be is largely dependent on how far can civil society, communities and key populations insert themselves into conversations about divvying up scarce resources; as global health initiatives scramble to cobble strategies to replenish their coffers with a funding bottleneck looming. Malawi is where the 52nd Global Fund met to propose what they would do and where they would go, subject many times, to conditionalities about how much they receive. But that the Global Fund matters was acknowledged and spectacularly so when the Global Fund on October 16, 2024 was awarded the "Commandeur" medal of the Central African Republic Order of Merit in recognition of the critical work achieved by the Global Fund to curb HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria, strengthen health systems, and save lives in the Central African Republic. It was a timely reminder also that it is the country commitment of their ministries of health and their leadership collaborating towards shared goals that makes for significant progress in strengthening health systems to prevent and address disease prevalence.

And it was shared goals that brought together constituencies of the Board to sit together in Malawi with other stakeholders to determine the path to be taken by the Global Fund in the next three-year grant cycle. Some of the reports that came up for discussion are presented in this special Board issue of our newsletter. We begin with the [Executive Director's Report](#) as is the tradition and then diverge. Instead of reporting on every report churned out by Secretariat, we instead speak about the [Sustainability Agenda](#), so that readers can get at a glance what it means because sustainability is the flavour of the season and what exactly is it in the Global Fund lexicon needs to be clear. Then comes the [allocation methodology](#) that is always the magnet for a great deal of ire and then huffy acceptance that when there is a smaller pie, what's the point of tussling and let's all calm down please. This is followed by a concise analysis of the Global Fund's [Strategic Performance](#) reports and what is to be read between the lines. And then comes the commentary on the [2025 Annual Evaluation Work Plan and Budget and the 2025 Technical Review Plan Workplan and Budget](#) that were part of the Operating Expenses budget of the Global Fund that was passed at the 52nd Board meeting of the Global Fund. Then we have the [Risk Management](#) analysis in brief followed by a guest column by Armelle Nyobe, African Constituency Bureau, who writes on the [impact of the work of the Global Fund in Africa](#) using the report of the Global Fund's Office of the Inspector General Operational Progress Report.

Amidst all the reports, the discussions, the commitments and the decisions, what shone clear is that nobody underestimates the challenges that lie ahead but neither is there cynicism that these cannot be overcome and time and time again, the need for balance was emphasized: between country allocations and catalytic investments, between expectations from stakeholders and what this demands from the sinews of staff, the extent to which the Global Fund can place itself in direct conflict with governments they must work with while standing up for key populations facing slight and stigma.

Global Fund Board Decisions at 52nd Board Meeting, Malawi, November 2024

In preparation for the next three-year grant cycle starting in 2026 (Grant Cycle 8), changes were effected through revisions to the four policies:

1. the Eligibility Policy;
2. the Allocation Methodology;
3. the Sustainability, Transition and Co-Financing Policy; and
4. Catalytic Investments.

The revisions were approved unanimously by the Board.

Changes to the Eligibility Policy and Allocation Methodology

Shifts funding towards lower-income countries and increases the proportion of funding for TB and malaria.

Changes to the Sustainability, Transition and Co-Financing policy

Strengthens the rigor and specificity of co-financing requirements and enables better preparations for transition order to support sustainable progress in the fight against the three diseases.

Aim:

More streamlined, impactful, and sustainable global health response. The Global Fund to continue to support countries' efforts to strengthen public financial management (PFM) so as to facilitate the delivery of credible, results-oriented health budgets, integrated disease programs, efficient flow of funds, effective budget execution, and strengthened accountability.

Catalytic Investment priorities for Grant Cycle 8

To focus on components of the Global Fund's Strategy that are critically needed to accelerate progress but not fully addressed through Country Allocations. This includes human rights, gender equity, NextGen Market Shaping, accelerated access to new innovations, and countering the impact of climate change on the health of the world's most vulnerable communities. The Catalytic Investment priorities for Grant Cycle 8 are also designed to leverage private sector contributions.

OPEX Budget

The Global Fund Secretariat operating expenses (OPEX) budget for 2025, set at US\$346 million was approved. Also approved were adjustments to the risk appetite statements, addressing in-country supply chain risks, related fraud and fiduciary risks.

And any thoughts about which aspect in the global health initiative sector you'd like to see covered in our newsletter are always welcome and we'd really appreciate suggestions on who can pen an article on it! Anyone who wishes to voluntarily contribute as a guest columnist and provide an incisive analysis or first-person account of what is happening at micro – or macro – levels in the field of global health interventions is also welcome. Any feedback and suggestions in French, Spanish, English can be sent to Ida Hakizinka ida.hakizinka@aidspan.org and/or in English to madhuri@aidspan.org

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