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of the Global Fund

Global Fund Secretariat is Reorganized

The Secretariat of the Global Fund has undergone a significant reorganization. The main changes have occurred at the level immediately below Executive Director Richard Feachem: some staff have left, some no longer report directly to Dr. Feachem, and some now have increased responsibilities. The number of director-level staff reporting to Dr. Feachem has been reduced from six to four.

According to a letter from Dr. Feachem to the board, the reorganization was necessary because of weaknesses that “impeded the Secretariat’s performance [and] led to an unacceptable level of stress for a number of staff. In parallel, the shifting focus within portfolio management, from grant negotiation to implementation and results monitoring, exposed inadequacies in the Secretariat structure.”

In addition, said Dr. Feachem, “there was lack of clarity of responsibility and authority in some areas, leading to policy drift and delays in decision-making. The structure [was] top heavy, with too many director-level posts. Talented and experienced professionals [were] not given sufficient freedom and authority to make decisions in areas for which they [were] responsible, and in some instances, skills did not match tasks.”

The reorganization took place following an internal assessment, supported by consultants, lasting several months. That assessment was inspired by a recognition that any new organization needs to evolve, and by concerns expressed by some that the Secretariat was not functioning as smoothly or as harmoniously as it needs to.

The Secretariat is now led by an Executive Management Team consisting of Dr. Feachem; Brad Herbert (who is now Chief of Operations); Christoph Benn (Director of External Relations); John Burke (newly hired as Chief Administrative Officer); Barry Greene (Chief Finance Officer); and, still to be hired, a Director of Corporate Strategy and Performance Measurement.

Brad Herbert, as Chief of Operations, now has responsibility over all Portfolio Managers (the staff who oversee grant implementation) and over two new teams: one responsible for Operational Partnerships and Country Support (led by As Sy) and one responsible for Portfolio Services and Policy (led by Eiichi Seki, who has just joined the Fund). The team led by As Sy will apparently focus in particular on problem grants; it will also oversee the grant proposal process.

The roughly seventeen portfolio managers have been divided into eight clusters, each consisting of at least two portfolio managers, one of whom serves as Cluster Leader. The clusters are Africa 1 (led by Duncan Earle); Africa 2 (led by Elizabeth Hoff); Africa 3 (led by Mabingue Ngom); Africa 4, including the Middle East (led by Hind Khatib Othman); Eastern Europe (led by Urban Weber); Asia 1 (led by Taufiqur Rahman); Asia 2 (led by Tom Hurley); and Latin America and the Caribbean (leader not known).

Christoph Benn, as Director of External Relations, now has responsibility over donor relations (i.e. fundraising), global partnerships, publications and multimedia, private sector and branding, and board relations and conferences. Corporate communications will be handled by the Executive Director's office.

The Director of Corporate Strategy and Performance Measurement, yet to be hired, will be responsible for ensuring that, in Dr. Feachem's words, "the Global Fund remains an innovative institution drawing on the best practices from both private and public sectors." His or her team will also be responsible for measuring the Fund's progress, both within the organization and at the grant-implementation level.

One aspect of the reorganization that has received criticism is that the five current members of the newly-formed Executive Management Team are all white men from developed countries. (A sixth member of the team will be added after a new senior staff position is filled.) In his letter to the board, Dr. Feachem acknowledged that this is "unsatisfactory." He added that of staff with any management responsibility within the Secretariat as a whole, 38% are female and 48% are from continents other than Europe and North America.

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