



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Global Fund Partnership Forum Preview

With the Global Fund now more than two years old, the Fund's leadership is taking steps to get feedback from a full range of stakeholders on its structure, process, and progress through a mechanism called the Partnership Forum.

The Partnership Forum is the fourth of the governing and advisory bodies mandated by the Global Fund bylaws; the other three bodies – the board, the secretariat, and the technical review panel – have been up and running for some time. The Partnership Forum finally debuted in March with an on-line forum, PartnersGF. Since then, the Fund has organized a series of regional Partnership Forum meetings that will culminate in a large face-to-face meeting that will take place in Bangkok on July 7 and 8.

The invitation-only meeting, according to Kate Thomson, the Fund's Civil Society Relations Manager, is designed to go beyond the "usual suspects" from existing board delegations, to tap people with direct country experience, especially those involved at the field level with implementation; people who are involved in CCMs or people who've wanted to get involved but haven't been able to; as well as other representatives of civil society (such as labor unions, the private sector, and researchers); and government officials. The invitation list, designed to achieve geographical and sectoral diversity, was created through discussions with Global Fund portfolio managers, as well as partners such as Roll Back Malaria; groups such as GNP+ and ICASO also sent out calls for individuals to nominate themselves. "We're at a stage where the Fund has been working for two years," Thomson says, "and we now have clear indications of what's working and what's not, why it isn't, and how it can work better." She describes the event as a "working meeting," focused not on presentations but on theme-based working groups with rapporteurs. She says the goal is to come up with "clear recommendations" that will go to the Board for consideration.

The four themes up for discussion are CCMs (including questions of inclusivity, democracy, whether they're playing a role in monitoring and evaluation, and how well relationships with Principal Recipients are functioning); the Fund's role as a financial mechanism (including questions of transparency, oversight, promptness and reliability, whether PRs have been selected wisely, and how the performance-based disbursement model is working); partnerships (including private sector partnerships, partnerships with people living with the diseases, and the role of partners in providing technical assistance and supporting resource mobilization); and, the big question, whether the Fund is actually reducing HIV, TB, and malaria infections, illness, and death (including whether the funds are reaching those most at risk, whether they're being used equitably, and what are the obstacles to having more impact on the diseases). Jeff O'Malley, the former executive director of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, will serve as the lead facilitator.

Thomson says she expects to hear "divergent views" between government and civil society and anticipates a critical debate about how the Fund's structure is working on the ground, including how well CCMs are functioning, and how relationships between CCMs and PRs and Local Fund Agents have played out on the ground.

GFO will be present at the Partnership Forum, and will report immediately afterwards on what takes place.

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