



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Italy Restores its Pledge to the Global Fund

Italy has decided that it will after all, although somewhat belatedly, pay its 2004 pledge of €100 million to the Global Fund. This means that the Fund can continue to state that no significant pledge to the Fund has ever been cancelled.

After a government official announced in December (see GFO Issue 38) that Italy would not be able to pay the pledge, the Italian NGO network and other supporters of the Fund, quietly backed by Secretariat staff, redoubled their efforts of the previous few months in favor of the pledge. Finally, at a meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Economy and a representative of the Prime Minister, it was agreed that the full 2004 pledge and 80% of the €100 million 2005 pledge will be drawn from the reserves of the Ministry of Economy. The decision was then approved by the Council of Ministries and announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One person deeply involved in the work by the Italian NGO network explained to GFO that the government had never formally cancelled the pledge; it was “just trying to forget about this matter” while tackling internal problems directly impacting the next election. According to this person, the recommitment to the pledge was pushed through by Gianfranco Fini, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, who “includes among his political priorities that Italy maintains its international commitments.”

The Global Fund's principles include that governmental support provided to the Fund should be “additional” – that is, should represent an increase in development assistance, rather than a diversion to the Fund from some other form of development assistance. The Italian decision to provide €180 million from the Ministry of Economy represents one of the relatively rare cases where this principle of additionality has been followed.

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