



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

LESSONS FROM THE UGANDA EXPERIENCE

I would not want Brad Herbert's job.

He and his team of a few dozen people at the Global Fund have to negotiate hundreds of grant agreements, disburse billions of dollars, and then attempt to ensure that the grants deliver the promised results with no inappropriate diversions of money.

The Global Fund money attracts wonderful people and organizations who do amazing things with it; but it also attracts some people who have other objectives in mind. To assume otherwise would be naïve in the extreme. Equally naïve would be to assume that because some apparent corruption has been uncovered, this proves that there is a fundamental problem with the Global Fund process.

How many other bilateral or multilateral organizations would launch an intensive investigation within days of receiving a credible report from a whistleblower, and then initiate decisive remedial action, and publicly announce it, as soon as the problems were confirmed? Most would first spend some time wishing the problem would go away, and would only then, reluctantly and slowly, look into things further, treating the whole matter as highly confidential.

The Global Fund is to be congratulated for its courage in handling the Uganda problem in a direct and transparent manner. And the Uganda Minister of Health is to be congratulated for agreeing to sit down with Brad Herbert on Tuesday and work out how best to proceed.

Having said that, the recent developments in Uganda show the need for some significant changes in Global Fund procedures.

First, the Global Fund should establish a mechanism that encourages other whistleblowers to report their

concerns. (While GFO welcomes information from future whistleblowers, it is only the Fund that can fully investigate their charges.)

Second, the Fund should write to every PR and every sub-recipient, letting them know about the actions that it will take if corruption is confirmed, or even strongly suspected.

Third, the Fund should set up a procedure that has a good chance of detecting corruption even if no whistleblowers come forth. Stricter audits should automatically be carried out with every Principal Recipient and sub-recipient. If the results of that audit raise some concerns, a much more thorough audit should automatically be triggered. This will not be inexpensive. If donors to the Fund want to be sure that none of their money is wasted, they have to allow more of their money to be spent on auditing.

The Fund must find ways to make it less likely that corruption will occur, and more likely that corruption is detected when it does occur.

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