



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

GLOBAL FUND TERMINATES GRANTS TO MYANMAR

The Global Fund has terminated its three grants to Myanmar (Burma), because it has concluded that political restrictions imposed by the government mean that the grants “cannot be managed in a way that ensures effective program implementation.”

Last month, the government of Myanmar instituted new requirements restricting access to grant implementation areas by relevant staff, and other requirements that affect procurement of medical supplies. The Fund stated that these measures breach the government’s previous written commitments.

The termination decision means that three grants, one each for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, with a total value of US\$ 35.7 million over two years, will be phased out by the Principal Recipient, UNDP, by the end of the year. All unspent money will be returned to the Global Fund.

Myanmar’s CCM, which is chaired by the health minister, said in a statement that it “strongly deplores the negative impact [the move] will have on people in need and refutes the reason given for termination.” The government restrictions are “only temporary in nature and do not justify irreversible termination of grants,” the statement said, adding, “The Global Fund’s response is clearly inappropriate”

The Financial Times quoted the Myanmar program manager for the UK’s Department for International Development as saying that it is “very regrettable” that the grants have been terminated. “These diseases are critical humanitarian problems, and the international community as a whole has to look at what can be done,” she said. “We can’t wait for a change in the political context.”

“Programs were just getting started,” added the Myanmar country director for World Vision. “To have the plug pulled like that has been devastating.”

The Fund's grants were the biggest health initiative planned for Myanmar. They were to provide anti-retroviral drugs to about 5,000 people over two years, vastly expand condom promotion programs, increase HIV testing, provide mosquito nets to prevent malaria, and strengthen TB controls.

The grants had long been criticized by some members of Congress in the US who oppose almost any increase in aid to Myanmar. The Financial Times reported that some observers believe Myanmar's new restrictions were a convenient excuse for the Fund to back away from the politically controversial program.

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