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## Board Plans Special Meeting After Failing to Choose an Executive Director

Six months after launching its search for a new Executive Director, the Global Fund reached an impasse at the board meeting that ended on Friday. Despite over twenty hours of intense discussion spread over four days, the board failed to reach consensus on any of the five short-listed candidates. The board therefore reluctantly decided to launch a new search and to make an appointment at a specially-convened board meeting to take place by mid-February. (The current Executive Director, Richard Feachem, agreed some time ago to serve until the end of March 2007.)

In the board's discussions, it quickly became evident that the top two candidates were Michel Kazatchkine (France's HIV/AIDS Ambassador and former Vice-Chair of the Global Fund) and Michel Sidibe (a citizen of Mali who is a top UNAIDS official). In numerous votes, Kazatchkine received the support of all or almost all of the "donor group" together with about half of the "recipient group", and Sidibe received the support of all or almost all of the recipient group together with about half the donor group. (Board members could support one or both candidates.) Thus, even though each received the support of more than two thirds of all board members, neither received the support of two thirds of both groups.

Since its beginning, the board has had a rule that important decisions require a "double two-thirds majority", with votes in favour from at least seven of the ten board members from the donor group and from at least seven of the ten board members from the recipient group.

Very little changed through multiple votes. Half of the donor group and half of the recipient group were willing to accept both of the two leading candidates, even though one or both was not their first choice. But the other half of each group dug their heels in and would only accept one of the leading candidates.

In the end, the board agreed to establish a new Nomination Committee consisting of four people from the donor group, four from the recipient group, and Peter van Rooijen, from developed-country NGOs, serving as what amounts to a non-voting chair. The Nomination Committee will, by the end of this month, present to the board a proposed action plan and decision-making procedure for a new search, and will then offer a ranked shortlist of five names (which could include names from the original shortlist, and/or applicants who didn't get onto the original shortlist, and/or completely new applicants). The board will then hold a special meeting by mid-February to make a final choice.

During the period since last April's board meeting, the board's Nomination Committee, supported by an executive search firm, had advertised the position, received 334 applications, and narrowed these down to a shortlist of five. In addition to Kazatchkine and Sidibe, the shortlisted people were Hilde Johnson, former Minister of International Development of Norway; Jim Kolbe, a senior Republican member of the US House of Representatives; and Bill Roedy, a US citizen and President of MTV Networks International.

The Nomination Committee presented the board with background details regarding the five shortlisted candidates, and the full board interviewed each of the five via teleconference during the week prior to the board meeting. None of the candidates were present at the board meeting.

The donor group consists of eight representatives of Western governments, one representative of the private sector, and one representative of foundations. The recipient group consists of seven representatives of developing-country governments, one representative of developing-country NGOs, one representative of developed-country NGOs, and one representative of communities living with the three diseases.

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