



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Groups in LAC Region "Deeply Concerned" About Possible Changes to Grant Renewals and Eligibility Criteria

A petition is seeking 1,000+ signatures

A similar petition will be launched in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Several regional organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have expressed concerns about what they call the Global Fund's "current situation" and the "negative effects" that could result from decisions taken subsequent to the release of the final report of the High-Level Independent Review Panel on Fiduciary Controls and Oversight Mechanisms.

The organisations are hoping to get 1,000 signatures from organisations and individuals both inside and outside the LAC region on a petition that expresses their concerns. The petition will be presented to the Global Fund Board at its next meeting on 21-22 November in Accra, Ghana.

The petition says that while the signatories share the Global Fund's policy of zero tolerance of fraud and corruption, measures being implemented as a result of the findings by the Office of the Inspector General, the reform agenda and the work of the High-Level Panel may make the situation worse, not better.

For example, the petition expresses "deep concern" about the decision by the Global Fund Board to consider changes to the application, approval and renewal processes for new and existing grants. At its last meeting in September, the Board said that it will "consider options for reallocation of existing commitments to prioritise high-impact interventions, which would increase resources available for new investments." Organisers of the petition told GFO they are concerned that this could mean massive cuts in the budgets of existing grants at the point when they are renewed for Phase 2. They said that a lot

depends on how “high impact interventions” are defined in this context.

Under the new eligibility criteria adopted by the Global Fund prior to the launch of Round 11, some proposals for the general pool are required to focus partially or completely on key populations and/or high-impact interventions. All proposals for the targeted pool are required to focus completely on key populations and/or high-impact interventions. “High-impact interventions” in a disease proposal is defined as “evidence-based interventions that: (1) address emerging threats to the broader disease response; and/or (2) lift barriers to the broader disease response, and/or create conditions for improved service delivery; and/or (3) enable roll-out of new technologies that represent global best practice; AND (4) are not funded adequately.” The eligibility criteria were meant to apply to new proposals. However, in light of the Board’s September decision, the Global Fund may decide to apply these criteria, or some modified version thereof, to Phase 2 Renewals.

(In early October, the Global Fund Board established a working group to examine options for changes to the application, renewal and approval processes for new and existing grants. See [GFO article](#).)

The petition says that if the Global Fund makes significant changes to grants being renewed for Phase 2, it would amount to changing the “rules of the game” in the middle of the game. The petition says that this would create a serious legal and institutional precedent, one that would jeopardise the credibility of the Fund, of CCMs and of principal recipients; and one that could cost lives.

Organisers of the petition are concerned that the Global Fund might look to “unsigned” Round 10 grants as a source of additional funding for Round 11. (The rule is that the grant agreement must be signed within 12 months of the proposal having been approved by the Board, and that if the agreement is not signed by then, the proposal becomes “unapproved.” Prior to Round 10, when extra time was required to complete the grant negotiations process, obtaining Board approval to extend the 12-month period by up to three months was fairly routine. The concern is that for Round 10 grants, the Global Fund may make it more difficult to obtain an extension.)

The Board’s September decision appears to open the door to possible changes in the Global Fund’s eligibility and prioritisation criteria and counterpart financing requirements for future rounds of funding (and perhaps even for Round 11). The petition says that the criteria and requirements in effect as of Round 11 were the result of years of work, review and discussion, and that signatories of the petition would “categorically reject” any attempt to change them. “The highest degree of sacrifice on the part of countries with concentrated epidemics and middle-income levels has already been offered to achieve consensus. Greater restrictions will profoundly distort the nature of a fund with global coverage.”

The Eurasian Harm Reduction Network is organising a similar petition in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Network told GFO that signatures will be collected both by personally approaching key organisations and by publishing the petition online. The petition will be in Russian and English.

Organisations and individuals interested in signing the LAC petition can find it [here](#) (in Spanish). An English-language translation was posted on the ITPC (International Treatment Preparedness Coalition) listserv on 10 October 2011. The following is a list of the regional organisations behind the LAC petition: Redtrasex, Redlactrans, LACCASO, ICW Latina, MLM+, REDLA+, ASICAL, Observatorio Latino, Friends of the Global Fund (LAC), CIAT, RELARD and COASCE.

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