Women4GF Asia-Pacific
Raising awareness and creating opportunities for key affected women

Bangkok, 14-16 November 2013

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CCM = country coordinating mechanism
CSS = community systems strengthening
GAC = Grant Approvals Committee
GES = Gender Equality Strategy
Global Fund = Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
NFM = new funding model
NGO = non-governmental organisation
NSP = national strategic plan
TB = tuberculosis
TRP = Technical Review Panel
UNAIDS = Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
1. Overview and Executive Summary

Gender diversity has a long and rich history in the Asia-Pacific region. That does not mean, however, that the lives of women in all their diversity have been easy or that tolerance reigns. Most societies are patriarchal, leaving women in general as second-class citizens who face significant economic, social and health challenges compared with men.

The situation is even worse for women who are transgender, sex workers or drug users. Stigma and discrimination force most to live on the margins of society. Members of these communities are poorer than average and highly vulnerable to violence and abuse, and in many cases have been stripped of their basic human rights. Due to fear, discrimination and isolation, they are often unwilling and unable to seek out and obtain adequate health, care and social services. Partly for those reasons, they have long experienced HIV and TB prevalence far above national averages.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) was created to address such challenges. Gaps persist, however. Despite some progress, the specific needs of women, girls and transgender people in the Asia-Pacific region in regards to HIV, TB and malaria remain largely unacknowledged and unmet. There is cause for optimism nevertheless. The launch in 2014 of the Global Fund’s new funding model (NFM) offers an opportunity for real change to better the lives of women in all their diversity.

From 14-16 November 2013—immediately before the 11th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP)—the Women4GF Asia-Pacific advocates workshop was held to mobilize stronger action on gender equality through the Global Fund’s NFM. More than 30 individuals attended from 11 countries in the region. All represent or work directly with and for populations vulnerable to HIV, TB and malaria and/or are living with the three diseases; most, too, are working at the grassroots level. The majority of participants were women (including transgender women), with three men also attending. A quarter of workshop participants were sex workers or represented sex worker communities.

A large share of participants had little or no previous experience with the Global Fund. Those advocates were invited because they expressed a strong desire to learn about the Global Fund as they seek to help their communities get access to more and better services in the future.

The two-day workshop was organised and facilitated by AIDS Strategy, Advocacy and Policy (ASAP) and supported by the Global Fund. Representatives from the Global Fund Secretariat and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) joined the community-based participants to provide background information and better understand experiences and needs in implementing countries.

Priority demands from participants

Based on discussions at the workshop, and looking to the Gender Equality Strategy (GES) that the Global Fund adopted five years ago, the Women4GF Asia-Pacific advocates identified a series of demands and actions that they would take—and that they expect from partners and key stakeholders—to ensure that Global Fund resources reach country programmes that have the greatest impact and advance gender equality. The five main overarching demands are listed below.

The Global Fund should invest more extensively and thoroughly in communities at the grassroots level.

This investment is essential to achieve real impact because community groups are best placed to reach and support key populations, including transgender women, sex workers and women living with HIV. The Global Fund already provides an entry point for such funding through its community systems.
strengthening (CSS) focus area. Few CSS interventions are proposed and funded, however. The Global Fund should make a concerted effort to increase uptake of this funding stream in all countries in the Asia-Pacific region, an effort that may require specifically requesting such interventions during three key components of the NFM: the country dialogue, concept note development and iterative grantmaking process. The requests could also include re-shaping existing grants to ensure that they are gender-transformative.

**All Global Fund stakeholders should recognize and support the need for women—especially key affected women, transgender women and women living with HIV—to be central to, initiate and be involved in all Global Fund processes.**

In practical terms this means that representatives from these populations must be included in reviews and updates of national strategic plans (NSPs), country dialogues, concept note writing and negotiation teams. This also means putting in place effective mechanisms for women to play a “watchdog” role and hold key players, including the Global Fund, accountable for following through on their promises. Similarly, all country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs) should include representatives with strong gender expertise, and have a diverse representation of women. The Global Fund Secretariat and CCMs should ensure that such meaningful engagement occurs—with monitoring mechanisms used to identify when it is lacking.

**More Global Fund money should reach communities, especially those working with and for women, transgender people and sex workers at the grassroots level.**

The majority of Global Fund funding for non-governmental stakeholders currently goes through international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). It is essential that steps are taken to “watchdog” that this support reaches communities working at the grassroots level. The NFM focuses on “investing for impact”, a principle that underscores the imperative of ensuring that a larger share of funding reaches community-based groups with better links and trust among individuals most in need of support, and most able to conduct appropriate and effective outreach.

**Technical partners, in particular UNAIDS, should provide more targeted support to communities, in particular to secure quality data and information on vulnerable populations and key affected women.**

The NFM requires prioritized, evidence-based grantmaking. Communities are well-placed to design data collection tools, and to help collect, organise and present essential data on the real impacts of HIV, TB and malaria—and thereby show the true impact on women and key populations. Technical partners should support efforts to mobilize community-generated data and to validate and affirm such data collection. Their support is critical to push countries and the Global Fund to identify who is truly most in need and thus where interventions should be directed.

**Targeted financial and capacity support is required for community mobilization at country level, and to sustain the development and effectiveness of regional and national action by networks of key affected women and women living with HIV.**

Collective advocacy and increased community capacity are needed in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure that the NFM opportunities are seized everywhere. Community mobilization at the regional and national level can help to increase awareness and build capacity, support joint advocacy around the NFM, and enable the sharing of good practices. Ongoing mobilization is essential to ensure that community groups are more united in their demands and approaches, and to keep gender equality as a high priority.

Workshop participants expressed a willingness to host such a regional networking function and to support ongoing capacity building, training, etc. in order to drive a community-led effort to bring women’s advocates together. The ultimate goal would be two-fold: i) to ensure that the Global Fund maximizes its impact by targeting resources where they are most needed, and ii) to reach key affected women and women living with HIV with the services they need through gender-transformative programmes.
2. Basic Background

2.1 About this workshop

The two-day Women4GF Asia Pacific Workshop in Bangkok was the third such gathering under the banner of an emerging project, Women4GF, launched in July 2013. Women4GF (www.women4gf.org) aims to coordinate and strengthen the ability of women’s rights advocates—in particular women living with HIV and affected by TB and malaria, and key affected women—to engage at country, regional and global (including Board) levels with the Global Fund and its NFM from a gender-equality perspective. The first and second workshops focused on HIV and TB, respectively, with participants from around the world. The Asia-Pacific workshop, in contrast, was designed only for advocates based in the region. It was also unique because, as noted in Section 1, it included a large share of participants with little or no previous experience with the Global Fund.

One of the main rationales behind the creation of Women4GF is that, despite the Global Fund’s Gender Equality Strategy (GES) being in place since 2008, gender equality and women’s rights have not been addressed adequately through Global Fund processes. Women’s rights advocates have not engaged and have been mostly absent from the conversation in comparison with other key Global Fund populations, such as networks of men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers and people who use drugs. The lack of strong, sustained energy around gender (from both civil society and within the Global Fund) is a key reason why the GES has hardly been implemented or understood at country level. As a result, women’s rights, priorities and challenges are not satisfactorily recognized or responded to throughout all Global Fund structures and processes. Ensuring the robust implementation of the GES, and monitoring compliance, is an immediate necessity—and is an important goal of the Women4GF initiative. Women4GF seeks to ensure that gender-transformative programmes—those that seek to address gender inequalities and the impact on the lives of women and girls—are financed by the Global Fund, to ensure that the Global Fund’s resources have maximal impact.

The following objectives were specified at the beginning of the 14-16 November 2013 Bangkok workshop:

- To strengthen the capacity of women’s rights advocates—especially women living with HIV and personally affected by tuberculosis (TB) and malaria, and key affected women—to engage at country, regional and global (including Board) levels with the Global Fund and its NFM from a gender equality perspective
- To learn from experience and begin to strengthen the capacity of partners in NFM focal countries to bring a gender perspective—in the country dialogue process, the development of concept notes, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and revision of forthcoming Global Fund grants
- To strengthen partnerships and engagement between women’s rights advocates, women living with HIV, women from key populations and stakeholders already strongly involved in the NFM and the Global Fund, including the Civil Society and Communities Board Delegations
- To build mutual capacity in gender and Global Fund processes and secure high level engagement with the Global Fund from a gender equality perspective
- To develop advocacy and action plans to sustain community-led efforts on gender equality with the Global Fund and to support the implementation of the GES
2.1 About this report

This report provides a summary of presentations, discussions and outcomes from the Bangkok workshop. It is not intended to be an in-depth account of all proceedings and thus does not discuss all information and resources chronologically or extensively (if at all). The document aims to support advocacy and decision-making efforts related to the Global Fund and key gender-related concerns and priorities among participants. (In-depth information about Global Fund structures and processes, including the NFM, is available on the Women 4GF website Information and Resources page [http://women4gf.org/category/information-and-resources/].

This report and the discussions held at the workshop are part of a process designed to be ongoing. It is therefore important to stress that the information and summaries throughout the report are based on what was known and discussed as of the dates of the workshop. Subsequent developments regarding the NFM, the GES and other Global Fund mechanisms are not reflected, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The report is structured as follows:

- Core information about Global Fund, including the NFM (Section 3). The section also contains a summary of participants’ main concerns.
- Summaries of presentations providing information about additional opportunities for financial and technical support for civil society and community groups seeking to engage more effectively with the Global Fund (Section 4)
- Summary of concluding action planning exercises (Section 5)
- Recommended entry points in the NFM for participants and other community groups (Box 1)

The report also contains 3 annexes:

- Annex 1 contains a list of participants
- Annex 2 includes a representative sampling of personal commitments made by participants for achievements by the end of 2013 and 2014.
- Annex 3 provides a summary of findings from a post-workshop evaluation form filled in by participants

Background material, including the full text of many of the presentations, is available at the Women4GF website (www.women4gf.org). Meeting participants also have access to a dedicated, password-protected, on-line dialogue space on that website.

3. The Global Fund in Practice: Core Information

3.1 Notable Global Fund structures

The Global Fund is technically a financing mechanism, not an implementing entity. This means it can be thought of as a “bank” that makes money available for use by countries that want and need funding to help expand and improve their responses to the impacts of HIV, TB and malaria.

The Global Fund’s Secretariat, based in Geneva, puts into action and oversees the decisions of a 20-member Board. Although the Board has ultimate decision-making power and responsibility, the majority of decisions are taken at committee level and then presented to the Board for approval. The most important of the three main committees for most community activists is the Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee (SIIC), which provides recommendations about the overall direction of the Global
Funds work. The Board nearly always approves committee recommendations – which means influencing SIIC and other committees can be very important.

The Global Fund is designed as a partnership involving a wide range of stakeholders. For example, half the Board members are from what is known as the “implementing bloc”—the countries, communities and individuals who should benefit from the money. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities have a direct say on the Board through three seats held by representatives from the following: Developing Country Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Delegation, Developed Country NGO Delegation, and Communities Delegation.

Most participants at the Bangkok workshop were likely to be eligible to join at least two of those delegations if they wished and were accepted: the Communities Delegation and the Developing Country NGO Delegation. The Communities Delegation comprises people living with and affected by the three diseases. It is the only constituency without a geographic constraint; in other words, people from all countries in the world are eligible to join.

All workshop participants were encouraged to consider applying to become a delegation member, if they were not already. The Communities Delegation is especially interested in having additional women join as part of an effort to put women more at the centre of debate and decision making.

Two other Global Fund structures were highlighted with workshop attendees:

- **The Technical Review Panel (TRP)** is an independent body that reviews the technical quality (or “soundness”) of proposals on behalf of the Global Fund and makes recommendations for funding decisions including changes. Its role is shifting from “approval/rejection” to assisting countries to prepare successful proposals. Under the NFM (see Section 3.2 below), its direct engagement will increase as it reviews concept notes and works with countries to prepare fully fledged (and acceptable) programmes.

- **The Grant Approvals Committee (GAC)** is a new structure was created as part of the NFM. It reviews proposals that are sent to it by the TRP and considers them in regards to several criteria, including i) technical soundness and ii) compliance with the Global Fund’s strategy and institutional priorities (including potential impact of the activities). The GAC is mostly comprised of members of the Global Fund Secretariat with one seat is reserved for civil society.

### 3.2 How the Global Fund disburses money: the NFM

The new funding model (NFM), officially approved by the Board in November 2012, is the cornerstone of the Global Fund’s 2012-2016 Strategy (“Investing for Impact”). It provides the framework for how the Global Fund disburses its money, which is its main objective. The key aims of the new model are to simplify the grantmaking process, make funding more flexible and predictable for implementing countries, and to have the greatest impact by ensuring that the bulk of funding goes to where the needs are greatest (especially countries with high disease burden and low per capita incomes).

The Global Fund is currently in the process of “testing” the NFM, with a handful of “early applicants” invited to participate in late February 2013. The full roll out is planned for March 2014, at which time all eligible countries will have the opportunity to access funding. An important point to note is that the NFM is not yet finalized and is still “evolving”, especially in response to what it learns from the testing phase initiated earlier in 2013.
The Global Fund calls the NFM an “iterative” process. This means there is the expectation that many steps in the process of developing a proposal will be repeated, if necessary, until the final outcome is satisfactory to both the Global Fund and the applicant. The series of steps, or components, begin at initial consideration of a country’s needs and continue through grant implementation. The graphic below, prepared by the Global Fund, shows the basic steps in the NFM. Summaries of several of the main steps and concepts are presented after the graphic.

**Country dialogue.** The core element of the overall NFM is called the “country dialogue”. It is intended to be an ongoing, multi-stakeholder process that is initiated and led at the country level. Among the sectors that the Global Fund expects to be represented in the country dialogue are government, civil society, key populations, people living with the diseases, technical partners (for example, UNAIDS), academia and other funders.

The idea is that the country dialogue is something that “naturally happens” and not something organised by the Global Fund. In practice this might consist of people sitting around a table and discussing past, present and future disease responses, openly and in-depth. It is assumed that the main programmatic and funding priorities for Global Fund proposals are to be identified through country dialogues. Those priorities should be reflected in national strategic plans (NSPs), which should be the basis of proposals submitted to the Global Fund, and interventions included in approved and implemented grant programmes. Priorities and interventions should be based on evidence (data, epidemiology, analysis, etc.) as well as a clear understanding of the needs and challenges facing the most vulnerable, including those living with and affected by the diseases.

It is important to note that the country dialogue and the CCM are *not* the same thing. Country dialogue is considered an overarching process that is not directly associated with the Global Fund. The CCM, however, is a Global Fund entity. In the new grantmaking structure, the CCM remains the formal “owner” of the funding request because it submits the concept note, makes in-country arrangements with the principal recipient (PR), and is responsible for moving the proposal forward.

**Concept note.** A concept note is a preliminary proposal for Global Fund support that should flow out of the NSP or investment case and the country dialogues. In theory, a concept note is supposed to be a relatively brief, basic document that lays out a country’s priorities and financial requests and thus initiates a back-and-forth process (which the Global Fund refers to as “iterative”) to finalize a full proposal. As seen in the testing phase, however, concept notes have been far more complex and lengthy than anticipated.
**NSPs and investment case.** The Global Fund recommends that concept notes be based on national strategic plans (NSPs) for the specific diseases. Countries develop NSPs themselves independently of the Global Fund and often with the assistance of technical partners including UNAIDS and WHO. “Good” plans include information on the impact of the disease (including data and trends), specific actions and priorities to respond, who or what should be involved, etc.

The Global Fund considers drafting, review and revision of NSPs to be part of the overall country dialogue process. As such, they should be developed with the involvement of a full range of stakeholders, including civil society, communities, people living with and affected by the diseases, and members of key populations. The importance of NSPs is reflected in the Global Fund’s strong encouragement that they be assessed through a “credible, independent and multi-stakeholder process.”

The Global Fund assumes that “good” NSPs will adequately show why its funding and other support might be needed. In the absence of a quality NSP, countries are required to provide a clear “investment case” for the amount of money they request and what they seek to use it for. The reason for this requirement is that the NFM is based on the Global Fund principle of “investing for impact” and so the investment case should demonstrate that resources would go to priority programmes that would impact on the three diseases.

**TRP and GAC review.** Concept notes are first reviewed by the Global Fund’s Technical Review Panel (TRP)—described in Section 3.1—to consider whether they have technical merit. Depending on that panel’s impressions, a concept note is either sent to the Grant Approvals Committee (GAC) for further review or returned to the CCM with requests for changes. The “iterative” principle means that there could be several rounds of back and forth aimed at improving the quality of the concept note.

Once the GAC approves the concept note, drafting a full-fledged grant begins. This includes creating a formal agreement and contract, determining a firm budget within the budget envelope already provided to the country for each disease and establishing a performance framework (indicators, in other words). The comprehensive proposal then goes back to the GAC for a second review; once approved by that committee, it is sent to the Board for approval. Grant implementation begins shortly after Board approval, with the money ideally flowing to countries far more quickly than it did in the previous system.

**Funding availability for individual countries.** In the previous rounds-based grantmaking system, countries were not provided with any guidance regarding how much money they should ask for. As a result, the range of requested amounts varied widely and often was not based on objective criteria. Many stakeholders, especially from civil society, observed that countries often asked for far less than they truly needed and some asked for more than it was realistic to spend in the time available.

The NFM seeks to address this problem, and improve “predictability”, by providing countries an initial amount that the Global Fund thinks they can realistically spend effectively and efficiently to have a substantial impact. This core amount is called “indicative” funding. The amounts for each country are determined through a complicated series of mathematical formulas based on disease burden (for all three diseases, considered separately); “ability to pay” (per capita income); and past performance, among other factors.

Grants are expected to last for three years. The total amount available to each country is based on the total amount the Global Fund has to spend over that period. (For the first three-year period, 2014-2016, the Global Fund raised around $12.1 billion, an amount announced in December 2013, shortly after the
Timelines under the NFM. The Global Fund also has no direct control over when countries submit concept notes during the 2014-2016 period and indeed part of the innovation of the NFM is for countries to determine when is most appropriate in terms of their own planning cycles. However, the Secretariat assumes the majority of eligible countries will initiate the process fairly early in 2014, especially if they have not had the opportunity to apply for funding (or have been unsuccessful) in recent years. According to estimates presented at the Bangkok workshop, the Global Fund expects a “peak” in the middle of 2014, shortly after the NFM is fully launched. (The “peak” refers to the total number of countries at one or more of the following stages of the grantmaking process: concept note writing, review by the TRP and/or GAC, and grant signing negotiations.)

In general, the timeframe is tight because many countries will want to move quickly so they can get their money and begin using it. Therefore, the Global Fund is recommending that countries start getting prepared and aware of the new processes as soon as possible, if they have not already done so. Bangkok workshop participants were urged to be aware of what is happening in their countries and not to “miss the boat”; otherwise, their ability to be involved in and influence new Global Fund grants would be limited as the next round of grant will be in three years time. Global Fund representatives suggested that a first step for participants would be to contact CCMs in their country to find out about timing and scheduling. With that information, they could start planning and identifying entry points for themselves and colleagues.

Preliminary estimates from the Global Fund, presented at the workshop, assume that four countries from the Asia-Pacific region will send in concept notes for HIV/AIDS grants in “early 2014”: India, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam. Countries expected to submit in the second half of the year include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Laos, Maldives and the Philippines. Global Fund representatives cautioned that these assumptions may not reflect what actually happens, or is already happening, on the ground in countries. They added, however, that in all of these countries—as well as everywhere else in the region—gender could and should be a priority in concept notes and final grants.

3.3 Gender and the Global Fund

3.3.1 Gender Equality Strategy (GES)

The Global Fund’s major gender-related step was the adoption in 2008 of its Gender Equality Strategy (GES). The four overall aims of the strategy, which had long been advocated for by civil society groups (and especially women’s groups), are to

- fund proposals that scale-up services that reduce gender-related risks and vulnerabilities to infection. (Such risks might include gender-related violence, such as sex workers being harassed and physically assaulted, and girls unable or afraid to go to school because of the possibility of sexual attack);
- decrease the burden of diseases for those most-at-risk (including, for example, migrants);
- mitigate the impact of the three diseases; and
- address structural inequalities and discrimination.

Based on these overall goals, the GES included outcomes that were supposed to be achieved by 2012. According to Global Fund representatives and other observers, few of those outcomes have been achieved. The lack of progress was first highlighted in a two-year evaluation, released in 2011. The
evaluation concluded that the GES itself was a good and potentially groundbreaking strategy, but that implementation had been weak.¹

Other independent reviews and evaluations have also found limited progress with implementing the GES. Some have shown, for example, that most Global Fund programming has not been “gender-transformative”, a definition that refers to activities and interventions that make a real and substantial change in the health, well-being, rights and lives of women. (See Section 3.3.2.)

However, the advent of the NFM offers new opportunities to move forward on gender, especially since there are more entry points during the grantmaking process where advocates and others concerned about gender issues can influence proposals. Also of note is that the new Global Fund leadership both at the board and in the Secretariat strongly supports the GES and has hired new staff to help promote positive change. Those Secretariat staff and others are expected to play important roles in pushing the TRP to focus on gender issues when reviewing proposals.

Such efforts are coinciding with, and will be supported by, the development of a GES implementation plan, that is expected to be finalised in early 2014 and will be reflected in new guidance on gender prepared by the Secretariat. A new advocacy and communications strategy regarding the GES and gender more generally is also being developed for launch in 2014.

3.3.2 Defining ‘gender-responsive’ programming

It can be difficult to determine what kinds of activities and interventions are valuable and “good” in regards to gender. Three main categories are usually used when considering the gender impact of interventions:

• gender-negative, -blind or -neutral;
• gender-sensitive; and
• gender-responsive or -transformative.

In general, the Global Fund expects to support programmes in which activities are gender-sensitive at a minimum—with those that are gender-transformative as the “gold standard”. The GES includes definitions of key terminology related to gender. Put simply, gender-sensitive interventions are those that take into account gender inequities and seek to ensure that women and girls benefit from the interventions. Scaling up services that reduce gender-related risks and vulnerabilities would fall within this category.

To be gender-transformative, an intervention should actively seek to redefine gender norms and relationships to overcome existing inequalities. Developing and supporting such interventions can be more difficult. They might include training and education on gender norms, programmes to combat gender-related violence, concrete steps to overcome lack of access to education among women and girls, and the development and implementation of strategies to address traditional and cultural practices that put women and girls at heightened risk.

¹ This independent formative evaluation was conducted by the Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation. The text of the evaluation is available on the Women4GF website at http://women4gf.org/2013/10/evaluations-of-gender-equality-strategy-and-sogi/.
Box 1. Influencing the NFM and Global Fund grants: potential entry points for participants and other community groups

Presenters at the workshop discussed ways and methods in which workshop participants and people involved with other community and key population groups could be involved at all points in the NFM process and influence grantmaking. Participants were reminded that the best way to ensure that key gender-related issues and priorities are reflected is to make the case for them at country level clearly, directly and forcefully.

Key entry points to get involved:
- NSP development, revision and monitoring
- Country dialogues
- Concept note writing
- Grantmaking negotiations, review and monitoring

At each of these entry points, it is important that all constituencies that need to be involved are invited, are able to participate (or at least be represented effectively), and have their needs and priorities addressed. A full range of constituencies would be a diverse one including women living with and directly affected by the diseases, key affected women such as sex workers, transgender women, and women who use drugs, and young women and girls.

Specific strategies and activities to consider:
- Get the right people involved (i.e., those with the time, capacity and ability to represent and consult with their community)
- Ensure that full, accurate information and data are collected and made available. This is essential to make the evidence case for more and better gender-related programming.
- Work collectively, perhaps by holding consultations and raising awareness in other ways, to strengthen the role of key affected women, women and girls living with the diseases and gender equality advocates on CCMs. This is an important step toward ensuring that their voices are heard and their priorities addressed.
- Learn about Global Fund guidance on grant programming (gender, community systems strengthening, key populations, etc.)
- Make sure that NSPs and concept notes undergo gender analysis and/or assessments.

Consultants can help manage some of the more complicated and difficult strategies and activities mentioned above, including data collection and gender analysis. Support for such efforts may be available from technical partners (e.g., UNAIDS and Stop TB Partnership) and Global Fund country teams. The Global Fund Secretariat, in particular the Community, Rights and Gender Department, can also provide guidance and direction if contacted.
3.4 Summary of participants’ concerns regarding the Global Fund and NFM

Workshop participants made numerous comments during presentations both about the Global Fund in general, and more specific about the NFM.

Broadly speaking, the concerns raised can be grouped into the following focus areas: i) timing, especially in regards to the roll out of the NFM; ii) inclusion in all main NFM components, from NSP development to monitoring grant implementation; iii) availability of and access to support from the Global Fund for communities to undertake advocacy and service-delivery activities; and iv) capacity and ability of communities, especially those of key affected women at grassroots level, to understand and then engage successfully.

The issue of effective engagement received a lot of attention at the workshop. Many participants noted the “low” level of education among their communities, a situation that stems in part from social, legal, economic and political stigma and discrimination. In most countries, important Global Fund structures and processes, such as CCMs, are dominated by governments who were reported to have little interest in involving communities or being transparent.

Global Fund representatives at the workshop acknowledged the concerns and discussed efforts underway to address many of them. For example, the Global Fund is developing some guidance around country dialogues that will aim to explain better how it might work. This new guidance is considered crucial because feedback from the testing phase of the NFM has highlighted confusion about a number of issues associated with the country dialogue. Among the questions commonly raised so far are who organises and “runs” it—for example, should it be the government or UNAIDS, or some other entity? Among other things, the new guidance is expected to state that the Global Fund will not consider a country dialogue to be “valid” unless representatives from all key populations in the country are involved. New CCM guidance and minimum standards are also being developed; they too will clearly indicate how and why gender equality advocates, communities and key populations should participate.

The Global Fund has also recognized that previous efforts to increase funding for community systems strengthening (CSS) had not been very successful. Such funding has long been considered the best way to help build the capacity of civil society groups, including those working with and for key populations, especially key affected women. Ideally, the money would be used for technical support and other activities that could help overcome education, awareness and financial gaps (among others).

CSS remains an important priority for the Global Fund, according to its representatives at the workshop. New efforts therefore are expected to i) explain its importance to the overall response to all three diseases, and ii) prompt countries to include CSS activities in new applications. The approach will likely focus on stressing the non-medical aspects of effective disease responses. As one participant noted, all the treatment in the world is not helpful unless there is a way to get the treatment to the people and have them understand and accept it. In most countries and contexts, civil society and community groups can and should play direct and expanded roles in such efforts.

And finally, Global Fund representatives urged participants to reach out with questions and problems in the future, including in regards to difficulty in getting their needs reflected in grants. Each country has a dedicated Global Fund country team and fund portfolio manager (FPM), with contact information is provided on the Global Fund website. Concerns can also be raised by directly contacting the Secretariat, including the Community, Gender and Rights Department.
4. Support for Women, Communities and Key Populations: Additional Opportunities

Numerous other opportunities are available to help community groups address the capacity gaps discussed in Section 3.4. This section summarizes some of the initiatives and programmes mentioned at the workshop, usually by representatives of the sponsoring entity. Workshop participants were encouraged to determine whether they and their groups were eligible—and if so, to consider seeking assistance.

4.1 ATHENA Network

The ATHENA Network is a global network that was created to advance gender equity and human rights in the response to HIV and AIDS. It co-sponsored and helped organise the first global workshop (in July 2013) associated with the Women4GF initiative.

In recent years, ATHENA has helped women and women’s groups to engage with National Strategic Plans and to prepare and disseminate documentation on gender and human rights. It also has supported political mobilization and advocacy for and with women and girls. Its efforts aim to support women in all their diversity, including but not limited to women living with HIV, young women, key affected women and migrant women.

Of particular relevance to the Global Fund and its NFM is ATHENA’s work on “gendering NSPs”. This effort has included the organising of regional consultations and workshops to ask women what the gaps are in existing plans and what might be done to fill them. Other kinds of NFM-specific support it has provided on occasion include technical assistance, writing support, gathering evidence and building local collaborations and networks.

ATHENA recently formed a partnership with AIDS Legal Network (ALN) to provide more targeted support to communities and advocates in countries eligible for Global Fund money. In 2014, the partners plan to roll out the initiative to five countries at first: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. Decisions about expansion and impact will be based on evaluation and access to funding. As of November 2013, ATHENA and ALN were still waiting for confirmation of needed external financing to launch the initiative.

The goal of the initiative is to increase understanding and awareness of the Global Fund’s grantmaking mechanisms. ATHENA and ALN intend to establish partnerships with national networks of women living with HIV and women’s rights organisations to convene local and/or national activities, such as dialogues, discussion groups, workshops and training sessions. One key goal will be to expand the leadership of women who are the most affected by the three in the five focus countries.

4.2 German and French government programmes

The German BACKUP Initiative, a German government programme, provides financial assistance to civil society and community groups to help them access and effectively implement Global Fund grants. The money is intended to strengthen civil society, and thus is available for capacity development only. Funding cannot be used for service delivery or treatment, for example.

Gender equality is one of four cross-cutting areas considered in BACKUP support. Therefore, groups that focus on gender-related issues (and work with and for diverse gender groups) are encouraged to apply.
Applications can be sent from organisations in any country currently eligible for receiving Global Fund support. Three types of technical support are available:

- Funding through the “fast access mode” is for specific, short-time activities (e.g., support for attending a meeting). With a maximum amount of €10,000 (US$13,400), it is intended to be provided quickly and with minimum paperwork and delays.
- The “consultancy mode” has no specific or implicit time limits. It supports the hiring of consultants who, for example, design strategies or work plans, or undertake a gender mapping in a country as part of Global Fund processes.
- Funding through the “project mode” is for more elaborate, longer-term activities—e.g., to develop a network. As much as €150,000 (US$ 201,000) can be made available through this funding stream.

One major requirement is that all applicants have their proposals endorsed by the chair of the country’s CCM. The initiative’s sponsors acknowledge that this requirement can be sensitive, such as when funding is sought to support individuals who are criminalized and highly stigmatized, such as sex workers or people who use drugs. In such cases, the German government’s development agency will support the applicant and contact the CCM directly to discuss the request—assuming all other eligibility criteria are met.

The BACKUP Initiative currently plans to provide funding through 2015 only. Therefore, applications for all three kinds of support must be received by April 2014.

Information about the initiative and application processes can be found on its website: www.giz.de/backup Questions can be sent by email to backup@giz.de.

The French government also offers targeted supported for communities through its 5% Initiative programme. Funding can be obtained for activities aimed at improving the quality of Global Fund grants, such as hiring consultants to undertake gender assessments and define organisations’ capacity needs. Similar to the German BACKUP Initiative, this French government programme focuses on strengthening civil society capacity—and money is not provided for direct services.

Additional information about Initiative 5% is available at http://www.initiative5pour100.fr/. Workshop participants were also encouraged to contact their Global Fund FPM and ask how they might apply for funding.

4.3 How technical partners can help: UNAIDS in the region

As noted in Section 3.1, the Global Fund is best thought of as a “bank”. It does not directly administer programmes or have staff based in countries. Therefore, it does not have the ability to provide technical assistance itself. Its main technical partners are responsible for playing that role: UNAIDS (for HIV), Roll Back Malaria (for Malaria) and the Stop TB Partnership (for TB).

RBM and Stop TB were not present at the W4GF Asia Pacific Workshop, but UNAIDS was represented and explained that UNAIDS has offices and staff in nearly every country that receives Global Fund support. Specially trained personnel are available to help increase and improve the engagement of communities and key populations with all Global Fund structures and processes. Gender specialists are based in most countries as well, including individuals who can undertake or advise on gender assessments of NSPs and concept notes. Local groups therefore are encouraged to contact UNAIDS with Global Fund-related requests, especially in regards to technical support.
UNAIDS also can provide assistance at a regional level, such as from its Regional Support Team for Asia and the Pacific, which is based in Bangkok. Staff at the regional office, including the gender specialist based there, should be contacted if local community and civil society groups do not feel they are receiving the type and scope of assistance they need from their UNAIDS country office.

Workshop participants were also asked to keep in mind the following activities and initiatives currently ongoing at the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia and the Pacific:

- By the end of November 2013, the office planned to launch a data hub website. Among other priorities, the site will summarize the strategic information that should be part of Global Fund country proposals. It will include a page on key affected women and girls, as well as those on other key populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM). The Regional Support Team urges community and civil society groups to provide feedback on the website so it can be improved to meet their needs. (The website is available at www.aidsdatahub.org/About-Us/Our-Partners).

- The UNAIDS Regional Support Team in Bangkok is participating in the global roll out of the new Gender Assessment Tool, created by UNAIDS, to evaluate if and how NSPs and concept notes address gender (including key gender gaps). The office held a regional workshop on the tool in Laos, in October 2013, and hopes the tool will be used regularly in the region as the Global Fund’s NFM is rolled out in 2014.

- UNAIDS sponsors a Technical Support Facility (TSF) in the region. The TSF is a good source of support for all stakeholders, including community and key population groups, in all issues related to the Global Fund. Currently the TSF is hosted by the International Planned Parenthood Foundation of Malaysia, but it was expected (as of November 2013) that a new host would be identified shortly in response to recommendations from a new business plan.

4.4 Joint Civil Society Action Plan (JCSAP)

In June 2013, the three Global Fund Board delegations—Developing Country Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Civil Society, Developed Country NGO and Communities Delegations—launched an effort to develop a Joint Civil Society Action Plan (JCSAP) with the Global Fund Secretariat. The delegations decided to take this step because members were concerned that the NFM was unclear and being pushed forward too quickly.

The overall goal of the action plan is to bring together, in one place, all of the different aspects of work that relate to civil society and the Global Fund. The expectation is that this will make it easier for civil society groups at all levels, and of all capacities, to become more fully (and successfully) engaged.

The Global Fund Executive Director strongly supports the plan; so too do technical partners including the Stop TB Partnership, UNAIDS and Roll Back Malaria.

One of JCSAP’s main priorities as of November 2013 was to identify important lessons learned from the NFM’s early applicants and move forward key recommendations based on them. As such, it hopes to influence the Global Fund’s final NFM guidance prior to the full roll out and to enable civil society to be involved effectively (including in regards to monitoring). Ideally, JCSAP will have a strong, consistent impact on gender given how important the issue is to its goals. JCSAP has eight building blocks:

1. Improving the quality of data
2. Making CCMs work
3. Building the right mechanism to facilitate civil society support
4. Increasing civil society effectiveness in delivery of services
5. Making the country process work
6. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of civil society and community participation
7. Working with the Global Fund Secretariat
8. Becoming more strategic as civil society

A JCSAP Task Team was established to move this process forward. It includes members from all delegations as well as technical partners. Different members of the Task Team have specific roles, e.g., in regards to gender and human rights. Women4GF is currently represented on the Task Team by Sophie Dilmitis.

5. Action Planning: Identification of Priorities and Next Steps

5.1 Top priorities for collective impact

The workshop concluded with a lengthy series of interlinked working group sessions in which participants considered future action steps. First, they were asked to specify three top priorities for the Global Fund and gender based on their previous engagement with the Global Fund (if any); what they had learned during the workshop; and their context-specific needs, expectations and challenges. (After the group work, each participant made a public commitment—in front of the entire workshop—for what he or she would personally seek to achieve by the end of 2013 and 2014. A summary of those personal commitments is included in Annex 2.)

Participants then discussed the results from working groups and agreed on a set of collective priorities to be noted in an outcomes statement to be released shortly after the workshop closed. The final text of the outcomes statement, which includes five overarching priorities, is included in Section 1 of this report. That statement was finalized and distributed in a variety of ways and forums (see Section 5.2 below) prior to the official start on 18 November of the International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP).

As the outcomes statement indicates, several themes dominated the group work. Participants were concerned about relatively low levels of understanding and awareness about the Global Fund in general and the NFM specifically. The limited and insufficient knowledge among communities and groups working with and for key populations is particularly troubling. These constituencies have the greatest prevention, treatment and care needs that could be addressed in Global Fund programmes. Yet these needs have been inadequately reflected in grants to date. One reason is that constituencies do not have the ability or capacity to be influential, even if they had the opportunity.

Among the other main themes were inclusiveness and representation, transparency, access and support (financial and technical). Though separate in some ways, all of these themes are closely linked. Rapid and extensive efforts should be undertaken to ensure that individuals from across the grassroots, communities and key populations spectrum can influence proposals from the moment the NFM is fully rolled out. Achieving this goal requires greater and more targeted financial and technical support for those groups across the Asia-Pacific region as well as stronger efforts to remove barriers such as governments’ refusal to recognize or engage with them. For example, more women and members of key population groups should be on CCMs and be able to participate effectively. They cannot achieve this goal without support to increase their educational, organisational, communications and monitoring capacity.
Without improvements in all of these areas, participants said they were pessimistic about the possibility of substantial increases in the number and quality of gender-transformative, let alone gender-sensitive, interventions in Global Fund proposals and grants. Failure to include such bold measures would be devastating to those most in need, including key affected women and notably transgender women and sex workers.

**5.2 Disseminating immediate workshop messages**

At the close of the workshop, participants discussed roles and responsibilities for disseminating the messages from the workshop—which were summarized in the outcomes statement (see Section 1). In particular, participants focused on dates and strategies associated with ICAAP and identified some key entry points. Individual participants agreed to disseminate and/or discuss the outcomes statement at the following ICAAP-associated venues and events:

- gatherings and a satellite of youth leaders
- conference media
- a plenary speech delivered by a transgender participant
- the ICAAP community manifesto
- Global Fund satellites and sessions
- members of the 7 Sisters network
### Annex 1. List of participants

Three categories of individuals who attended all or part of the 14-16 November 2013 workshop are presented below. The first includes meeting participants from the region, the second includes resource specialists, and the third includes support personnel. In each category, individuals are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Unless specified otherwise, the country refers to where the individual is currently based.

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**Attended Part of the Meeting**

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Annex 2. Summary of personal commitments

This annex includes a summary of the results of an exercise at the end of the workshop in which all participants were asked to make commitments. Each was asked to announce to the group what he or she would seek to personally achieve by the end of 2013 and 2014 in regards to work associated with the Global Fund and gender.

Some commitments were context-specific and unique, while others were exactly the same as or similar to those made by other participants. The list below is a representative sampling only, and commitments are not linked to individuals.

**By end of 2013:**

- Provide feedback of the results of this workshop to colleagues in the country through mobilization
- Circulate information on the Global Fund to members of my network
- Initiate a discussion with colleagues from my country who also attended this workshop, in order to decide what we should do next collectively and collaboratively
- Make contact with representatives from technical partners in my country to explore support options, including (perhaps) for a gender assessment
- Have held at least one meeting to develop a strategic plan to consider gender balance in the next concept note
- Begin working with networks in the region to understand the work we can do
- Contact information for relevant Global Fund FPMs will be provided to all workshop participants

**By end of 2014:**

- Ensure that gender equality is incorporated in all concept notes and the NSP
- See that a gender assessment has been completed and the results widely disseminated and followed up on
- Complete research on and finalize a report assessing the role and participation of women on the CCM, with recommendations included to help their voices be heard more (if needed)
- Have helped raise community voices on the CCM
- Engage women living with HIV in Global Fund processes and encourage them to join networks
- Complete implementation of GES
- Established a regional networking hub, perhaps in Bangkok, to help carry forward the work begun at the workshop