



Promote and Protect Human Rights and Gender Equality

Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) wishes the Global Fund Board a successful virtual dialogue and we trust that all Board discussions include a gender equity perspective. We highlight the following points on COVID-19 and feedback from Window 1 for discussion at this 43rd Global Fund Board Meeting.

COVID-19

As per [W4GF' advocacy statement on COVID-19](#) shared with the Global Fund secretariat and more broadly with advocates and countries - we congratulate the Global Fund for taking early and decisive action to support countries with extreme vulnerability. W4GF continues to stand in solidarity with people globally as together we face the growing COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has drawn into sharp focus the uneven vulnerabilities around the world, and specific threats for the safety of women and their ability to make decisions about what happened with and to their bodies and their ability to access essential medications and services – for HIV, TB and Malaria.

As we all know, globally 1 in 3 women experience some form of violence in their lifetime. Some studies suggest that in high burden HIV-countries of southern and eastern Africa, between 25% and 50% of all new HIV-acquisitions amongst women are linked to women's experiences of IPV and this is more acute for young women. In Southern and Eastern Africa global reviews show transgender women are at increased vulnerability to HIV linked to the high levels of direct sexual and physical violence and the transgender movement has expressed concern about how they will be treated when they have to disclose their gender if they need to access COVID-19 support – not to mention the violence against sex workers perpetrated by clients or state actors, including law enforcement agencies. There is also increasingly strong evidence for GBV as a consequence of HIV. This includes research that shows women living with HIV experience high levels of violence from partners following disclosure of HIV-status.

The Global Fund's guidance to countries is solid and we thank you for bringing important visibility to gender and human rights as key pillars of effective responses. All existing challenges and gender inequities are now being exacerbated and experienced more by women – across ages and diversities due to the lockdowns. Moving forward – given that the above has huge implications for the Global Fund we request that that the Global Fund continue to:

- Monitor its policy and continue to encourage countries to adopt programmes and services that are 'gender security aware' and responsive. This must be continuously reinforced in Global Fund guidance and support to countries.
- Ensure accountability and request that counties provide updates on how funds are being used to enable women and adolescent girls and young women to escape immediate impacts of violence, and the related increased risks of HIV as well as their ability to access treatment for HIV, TB and malaria and essential sexual and reproductive health and rights services which save lives.
- Ensure that communities remain at the core of responses to COVID-19, in global and local decision-making processes, including funds accessed through the C-19 Response Mechanism.



Reflections from Window 1

As expressed by W4GF Key Collaborators many of whom engaged in Window 1, we are aware that a new Technical Review Panel (TRP) will provide updates from their review of funding requests and we hope that as [previously requested](#) the Global Fund and the TRP:

- Call out funding requests that have not invested in community systems – especially where countries have not fully absorbed all grant fund. These funds could be reprogramming to women’s rights groups conducting unfunded work. As mentioned on a W4GF webinar last week which provided [reflections on window 1](#) there are many countries who do not understand community systems strengthening (CSS) and more countries need to adequately include CSS within their main allocation.
- Return funding requests with specific and concrete guidance and instructions to revise and strengthen gender-sensitive and transformative interventions, programmes and services if they do not include interventions to address the needs and rights of women and girls. This includes action in countries where key affected women are criminalized (e.g. women who use drugs, sex workers and transgender women) and are missing from proposals.
- Strongly recommend that countries share the TRP feedback with civil society and communities who engaged in the process as part of the ongoing country dialogue as well as further iterations of the proposal and maintaining civil society and community engagement into grant making.

As mentioned on a W4GF webinar mentioned above – all women community leaders and key partners from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Botswana, Malawi and Haiti (UNAIDS) as well as other W4GF Advocates expressed the importance of Technical Assistance (TA) and its ability to be a game changer for communities. W4GF Advocates and partners who have accessed the Global Fund community, rights and gender (CRG) TA as well as support provided by CRG Regional Communication Platforms have shared that this enabled their participation, harmonised priorities and supported early planning and meaningful involvement. This also included TA provided by GIZ and UNAIDS. Whilst we are happy to hear this we remain concerned that to date we have not seen enough progress around Strategic Objective 3: Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and Gender Equality and we must step up action to make sure that the countries deliver for women and girls.

Whilst W4GF recognise tremendous gains within this current strategy around ensuring that gender equality and human rights are a top-line strategic key objective of the Global Fund and around women’s participation and engagement in the country dialogue process, we also note that we are not where we should be. We must make sure that efforts RESULT in programmes and services that change the lives of women and girls.

Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) mobilises women in all their diversity to ensure that the world’s most important finance mechanism for the HIV, TB and malaria supports programmes that meet the rights and needs of women and girls. For more information, visit the W4GF [website](#); [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or contact Sophie Dilmitis, W4GF Global Coordinator sophie@women4gf.org