

W4GF Statement: The Global Fund Strategy 2023-2028

1. We wish to congratulate the Global Fund at its 46th Board Meeting (8 – 10 November 2021) as it votes to approve of the Global Fund Strategy 2023-2028 *Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World* with a primary goal to end AIDS, TB and malaria.
2. W4GF Advocates have engaged in this highly consultative two-year process and we welcome this new Strategy and its mutually reinforcing objectives that promote people-centered services with intensified action to address inequities, human rights and gender-related barriers. This Strategy can enable the Global Fund to deliver on the unmet promises made in the [Gender Equality Strategy](#)¹ in the second quarter of 2009.
3. Given that this Strategy Narrative will kickstart preparations for implementation and inform a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Framework with key performance indicators (KPIs), to measure the success of the Global Fund, we request that W4GF and its advocates continue to be meaningfully engaged and that the Global Fund delivers on the following:

3.1 Ensure a well-resourced team on gender equality across the Global Fund

- 3.1.1 To deliver this Strategy we affirm previous requests that the Global Fund scale up expertise and input on gender and gender equality, women and girls, across all Global Fund structures at global, regional and national levels. This includes urgently redressing the current situation where the Global Fund Secretariat no longer has focused attention on gender equality in the Community, Rights and Gender team. All of this work needs to be led and supported by a team of Gender Advisors at the Global Fund Secretariat. This must change if the Global Fund is to effectively deliver this strategy.
- 3.1.2 Continue to put in place robust structures and systems so that there is always gender equality expertise in key decision-making structures of the Global Fund, including the Global Fund Board and its committees, the Technical Review Panel (TRP), the Grant Approvals Committee, fund portfolio managers and country teams, local fund agents (LFAs), CCMs, principal recipients and sub recipients. The input and influence of gender advocates is essential in the Global Fund's funding cycle and its critical allocation, planning, proposal, grant-making and evaluation components at country level.

3.2 Provide funding for communities

- 3.2.1 This Strategy falls short on two accounts:
 - 3.2.1.1 It fails to commit to ensuring a direct funding stream for communities despite the many bonified and legitimate requests across networks and organisations. This is ironic given that the Global Fund was born out of community activism and that the Strategy is intended to put communities at the center. We know there is chronic underfunding for the work that communities are doing around HIV, TB and malaria. The same is true for women's rights: *less than 1 % of all gender-focused bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) goes directly to women's rights organisations and institutions.*^{2,3} An important way to redress this is to ensure that communities of women-led, key population-led and community-led organisations are supported to lead our own programmes for services and advocacy. We hope to see the operational plan articulate funding that actually does promote people-centered services with intensified action to address inequities, human rights and gender-related barriers.
 - 3.2.1.2 It has deprioritised [Communities Systems Strengthening \(CSS\)](#) as a core backbone to build robust responses to the three diseases, and for sustainable resilient systems for health. This is aligned to the same actions we see as countries deprioritize CSS in funding requests submissions, or linking it to one simple intervention (e.g. community health workers). CSS includes strengthening the engagement of

¹ https://women4gf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/core_genderequality_strategy_en.pdf

² [Applying a Feminist Lens to Grantmaking for Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls: Funding for Transformative Change. Coalition of Feminists for Social Change \(COFEM\), 2021.](https://cofemsocialchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Guide-to-Grantmaking_19.10.21.pdf) https://cofemsocialchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Guide-to-Grantmaking_19.10.21.pdf

³ [Donor support to southern women's rights organisations OECD Findings](https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf) <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf>

all communities, and advocacy for improving the policy, legal and governance environments that affect the social determinants of health, including the syndemics⁴ of extremely high levels of violence against women and girls. This is particularly important as the Global Fund begins to transition out of countries, making the need for robust, sustainable systems led by and delivered to women, in particular women from key and vulnerable populations, even more urgent.

- 3.2.2 **The Global Fund must have a specific funding stream to communities including women-led networks and organisations responding to HIV, TB and malaria.** This should include retaining robust policies – such as a quota system – to ensure that community-based organisations become Principal Recipients, Sub-Recipients and sub-sub recipients. This must include funding for communities of women’s rights and key affected women’s organisations. This could require more directive requirements regarding dual-track financing and also ensuring that communities and other civil society partners are supported with increased and more sustainable capacity-building opportunities.

3.3 Develop a robust M&E accountability framework on gender equality

- 3.3.1 W4GF hopes to continue to be engaged to develop clear KPIs on the gender related objective and other objectives. Only through regular measurement and evaluation will countries remain focused and deliver effective programmes to improve results. Regular analysis must measure progress and act on where we need to do more and do it better. This should be included beyond CRG priorities and as part of country performance indicators and the Country Team’s effectiveness criteria.
- 3.3.2 We reiterate the importance of the recommendations from the Technical Review Panel (TRP) who provide essential guidance. We note the only [TRP reports](#) that have been made public from this allocation cycle were from windows 1 and 2. We request that the Global Fund share the TRP reports as part of its accountability mechanisms. These give important direction to the Global Fund Secretariat and to assist applicants to make proposals that are strategically focused and technically sound. The Global Fund must do much more to track impact and progress with an independent approach.
- 3.3.3 The Global Fund must hold firm to its original values and ensure that funding requests are robustly reviewed by independent technical experts with expertise on gender equality, human rights, RSSH, sustainability as well as the disease expertise. This is essential for the Global Fund to have confidence that funds will have the anticipated impact, and will be invested in technically sound and strategically focused interventions that will be sustained by countries and helps them take steps to health equity and equality.
- 3.3.4 We are excited that community-generated data will feed into national routine program monitoring systems, including Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), as well the Secretariat’s own data systems to enhance understanding of how services are performing for communities and we expect to see increased funding to enable community-generated data.
- 3.3.5 The Global Fund outcome indicators to measure progress on gender equality must align to targets outlined in key global strategies including the [Global AIDS Strategy](#) including to *scale up and fully resource community-led service delivery and monitoring including that 80% of service delivery for HIV prevention programmes for key populations and women are to be delivered by community-, key population- and women-led organizations.*

W4GF is a dynamic global platform of women and gender equality advocates who share a deep commitment to ensuring that Global Fund programmes are gender-transformative to meet the rights and priorities of women and girls in all our diversity. For more information, please contact Sophie Dilmitis, Global Coordinator, Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) [EMAIL](#) | [WEB](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#)

⁴ [Syndemics: a new path for global health research](https://secure.elsevierhealth.com/action/getSharedSiteSession?redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thelancet.com%2Fjournals%2Flancet%2Farticle%2FPIS0140-6736%2817%2930602-5%2Ffulltext&rc=0)
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