

Dr. Michel Kazatchkine
Executive Director-designate
Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis
and Malaria
Chemin de Blandonnet 8
1214 Vernier
Geneva, Switzerland

22 February 2007

Dear Dr. Kazatchkine,

I write on behalf of the Advocacy Working Group of the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA), a partnership dedicated to enabling all people to have access to a motivated, skilled, and supported health workforce. Our Alliance is privileged to include the Global Fund among its membership, and congratulates you on your election to serve as the new Executive Director of the Global Fund.

As the Secretariat finalizes its paper for the Policy and Strategy Committee on the future role of the Global Fund and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS), we urge the Secretariat to: 1) support a wide spectrum of HSS activities; 2) encourage HSS activities that are cross-cutting and so contribute to broader health system strengthening; 3) be open to any HSS activities that are needed to reduce the spread and impact of at least one of the target diseases, without further restrictions, and; 4) re-introduce a separate HSS component.

This approach is vital to enabling the Global Fund to continue progress in achieving its mission of significantly reducing the infections, illness, and death caused by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and as stated in the Global Fund Framework Document, to do so “in ways that will contribute to strengthening health systems.”

The global health workforce crisis poses a significant threat to fulfilling this mission. The World Health Organization has identified 57 countries facing a critical shortage of health workers. This puts the Millennium Development Goals in jeopardy, including Goal 6 – halting and beginning to reduce the spread and incidence of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases. The Global Fund is perfectly positioned to help enable countries reach this goal, including by supporting investments in the health workforce where needed to advance the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria.

Addressing this crisis will require a significant level of investment, more than can be expected from any single entity: WHO has estimated that severe shortage countries will require approximately \$25 billion globally to train and pay new doctors, nurses and midwives.

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Given the level of investment required, every major source of health funding has an important role. We hope countries will be able to access the Global Fund to finance a portion of their strategies to scale up their health workforces, as Malawi has done through Round 5 as well as reprogrammed Global Fund money.

We believe that the best way to achieve this is through a distinct HSS component, which would be the most direct and straightforward way to support health workforce and other HSS needs. This HSS window would also facilitate mobilizing technical partners involved in health system strengthening activities, thus helping ensure the success of HSS proposals.

A Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that supports a wide spectrum of HSS activities, encourages cross-cutting activities, does not impose special restrictions on HSS activities, and includes a separate HSS component has the best chance of both saving lives now and ensuring that the Fund's successes are continually built upon and sustained for the long term. We look forward to working with you to help ensure a continued strong and successful Global Fund.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Friedman

Chair
Advocacy Working Group
Global Health Workforce Alliance

CC: Christoph Benn, Director of External Relations
Helen Evans, Deputy Executive Director
Richard Feachem, Executive Director
Lieve Fransen, Chair of the Board
Carol Jacobs, Vice-Chair of the Board
Daniel Low-Beer, Deputy Director of Performance Evaluation and Policy
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Bernhard Schwartländer, Director of Performance Evaluation and Policy