**Perspectives on next steps with gender equality and the Global Fund:**

**views to inform SIIC discussions from women living with HIV and women’s rights advocates**

From 10-12 July 2013, 35 experts on gender equality, from over 20 countries, met in Geneva to focus on the Global Fund. Twenty-three of the participants were women’s rights advocates working at grassroots levels, and with grassroots organizations (over three-quarters of them openly living with HIV) and they were joined by experts from the Global Fund and UN agencies. This meeting was supported by the secretariat of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), UNAIDS and UNDP (with some support from GIZ) to strengthen women’s engagement with the Global Fund. The meeting was organized and facilitated by ASAP (AIDS Strategy, Advocacy and Policy) and the ATHENA Network, who intend to work together to co-ordinate and build an ongoing process of engagement for women’s rights advocates - in particular women living with HIV and TB and affected by malaria - with the Global Fund and its processes, and to input to decision making structures. The timing of this first global meeting was designed to inform upcoming discussions at the Global Fund’s SIIC (Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee) that meets in Geneva 16-18 July 2013. Participants attending the meeting made the following recommendations for consideration by the SIIC:

**1. In considering the paper discussing implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy (GES), the SIIC should:**

* Require Global Fund reporting to include sex- and age-disaggregated data.

Evidence is a main principle of the NFM. A comprehensive data set would include sex- and age-disaggregated data. Therefore, the Global Fund should **require** (not merely recommend) that such data be collected and reported. Collecting and reporting such data provides a key opportunity to track implementation and needs, to ensure that gender-sensitive and gender-transformative activities are supported in Global Fund grants and to raise awareness of gender-related concerns. Insufficient gendered evidence, and the lack of requirement of this by the Global Fund is a main reason why stakeholders at all levels, especially at country level, may overlook and fail to prioritise sufficient activities and funding focused on the needs and priorities of women and girls, and that will deliver gender equality.

* Budget sufficient resources for the Global Fund Secretariat to undertake and monitor implementation of the GES**.**

Implementation of the GES should be costed. That initial step should be followed by the provision of targeted, sufficient resources to implement the GES. This would include action to

i) conduct a strong advocacy and communications campaign that reaches stakeholders at all levels[[1]](#footnote-1);

ii) implement gender equality training for CCMs, PRs and other key stakeholders;

and iii) monitor and evaluate all Global Fund programming to ensure gender-related issues are considered and addressed effectively.

**2. In considering the CCM eligibility paper, the SIIC should:**

* Require gender focal points on all CCMs.

There is a need to integrate gender equality in Global Fund programming and implementation more thoroughly than is currently underway in most countries. Effective responses to gender-related challenges and concerns require gender-sensitive men and women to be involved at all stages of the NFM process, including on the CCM. Inclusion and enhanced awareness on such structures is especially important because CCMs remain a core component of Global Fund programming. Regardless of the extent of gender-sensitive discussion and engagement in country dialogue processes, CCMs remain the gatekeeper of Global Fund proposals. Vital gender-related issues are unlikely to be included adequately in concept notes and thus moved forward through the NFM unless CCMs include trained and monitored gender focal points.

**3. In addition, the SIIC should:**

* Require gender analysis to be a conditionality of the concept note.

Currently the NFM processes suggest and recommend to countries that they include gender analysis when developing the concept note. This is a good step forward, but it is not strong enough. The Global Fund must **make it a requirement and take steps** - including through funding and technical support - to enable the country to undertake such analysis. FPMs and staff from technical partners should be made aware of such requirements and be included in relevant training and technical support, if necessary so that they are able to provide the requisite support to countries through the NFM processes and in the development and iteration of concept notes.

ASAP and ATHENA Network,

On behalf of global meeting participants

15 July 2013

1. In line with the third area of intervention of the GES “Develop a robust communications and advocacy strategy” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)