



## A New Global Fund Strategy Grounded in Realities: Human-Centered Response to end the Epidemics

Dear The Global Fund Chair of the Board, and Executive Director;  
Donald Kaberuka and Peter Sands,

APCOM and 11 country partners from Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Vietnam – the community-based organizations working to advance the wellness of gay men, other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender communities, and for effective, rights-based HIV response in Asia and the Pacific region. We urge the Global Fund to include voices of our community in the strategy development-related processes to ensure the next strategy of the Global Fund is grounded in realities and responsive to the emerging needs of gay men, other MSM and transgender people.

We specifically request the Global Fund to put more attention and monitoring on gay men, other MSM and transgender people, and the specific HIV-response and investments this key population needs in country-level grants to achieve impact in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In our opinion, the current prioritization and investments in the gay men, other MSM and transgender people response in the region is inadequate; but also lacks the minimum level of coverage and scale-up in services. There is also greater need for the development and implementation of innovative programming that will achieve impact to end the epidemic in 2030. This has undermined the ability of the Global Fund to achieve its current Strategic Objective on scaling up evidence-based interventions with a focus on key and vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by the three diseases (Strategic Objective 1).

**We therefore urge the Global Fund to ensure that its new strategy and operational plan prioritize investment and support for gay men, other MSM and transgender people.** We call for the strategy to put a much greater emphasis on inclusion and non-discrimination of our community in its articulation, demonstrate clear aspiration to address health, human rights and development needs of gay men, other MSM and transgender people as well as outline how progress achieved in this area can be monitored.

Based on our experience of engaging on Global Fund-related processes at country and regional levels, we would like to put forward some practical considerations on how the Global Fund can more effectively **operationalise** the new strategy to maximize its impact on the response to HIV among key populations, including gay men, other MSM and transgender people:

### 1. Maximise Catalytic Funding Mechanisms, including the Regional/Multi-country Grants to Strengthen and Sustain the HIV response

Often this is the mechanism that allows MSM- and transgender-led organizations to strengthen their organizational and programmatic capacity as well as their roles in effective HIV responses. As raised by MSM and transgender community networks, the Global Fund must recognize that the multi-country grant will maximise great success of responding to HIV at the regional and country level if the agenda and program are designed by the MSM and transgender communities. Maximising the regional/ multi-country grant also means sustaining the movements in the region and strengthening the organizational capacity of MSM and transgender networks to address the gaps in the countries for a more effective and key populations-focused HIV response. The multi-country grant should be maximised by matching the expertise of the networks to the required assistance in the HIV response.



## 2. Develop Regional Investment Strategy for Each Region to Guide Country Prioritisation

One size does not fit all. For Asia Pacific, attention must be put into MSM- and transgender-led interventions and scaling up innovations, sustainability of quality services for key populations and key population-led organisations and networks. In countries that are in the process of transitioning out of Global Fund funding, the limited scale up of MSM and transgender programmes and support for community-led organizations have been detrimental to reaching the key populations with services and in some cases threatens to reverse the success of Global Fund programmes in the region. Regional strategy must respond to community-specific needs and wants and integrate flexibility to be adapted in specific contexts, including emergency crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This must include the implementation of community-led differentiated service delivery (DSD) and other innovative approaches utilizing technological advancements and scaling-up innovative interventions that we know work such as PrEP, U=U and HIV self-testing (HIVST) which has received considerable aspirations in recent years. Also needs to be noted that gay men, other MSM and transgender community oftentimes face cross-cutting vulnerabilities that require specific attention, for example the epidemic of sexualized drug use (chemsex). Existing interventions for these communities are consistently met with significant challenges, particularly under restrictive environments in countries where same sex acts are criminalized. Systemic responses to address human rights and gender-related barriers are very much needed, along with program development that promote norm changing and affirmative action from key stakeholders. With intensified and flexible funding from the Global Fund, the regional community-led organization can support strengthening innovation, scale-up and sustainability at the country level, which is tailored to the needs of gay men, other MSM and transgender communities.

## 3. Moving to Measuring Quality

For the human-centered approach, the Global Fund must change the way that it looks at monitoring and move to more qualitative indicators - from the quality of services provided and received in community settings and/or at health facilities, to organisations being competent to work with and provide services for key populations. A strong and sustainable community-led monitoring (CLM) and data sharing mechanisms will support this idea, through the development of community friendly tracking measures to assess performance indicators and overall quality of programmes, along with data safety and security assurance for gay men, other MSM and transgender communities. The focus on CLM to generate input from recipients of HIV services in a routine and systematic manner that will translate into action and change in HIV services will contribute towards addressing health inequity and ultimately lead to improved HIV outcomes among key populations. Collection, analysis and use of data on key populations will need to ensure safety and security considerations, especially in countries where same sex acts are criminalised.

To further contribute to the strategy development process, APCOM will assist key population network/organization partners at the country level to do a country-specific advocacy letter, which will be shared with the Global Fund. This is an effort to ensure that the next strategy of Global Fund not only reflects communities' voice but that the next strategy will truly be human-centered and addressing community needs. As a regional organization, APCOM will continue contribute to increase capacity of gay men, other MSM and transgender community engagement at all decision-making process for the improvement of programmes, policies and processes.

We truly hope that this initiative will help shape the next Global Fund strategy beyond 2022 that not only puts the community at the heart of the response, and that resources will be put into the community as well.

Best regards,

Signed by the organisations below



Country	Organisation	Name	Title
Bhutan	Rainbow Bhutan	Tenzin Gyeltshen	Executive Director
India	The Humsafar Trust	Yashwinder Singh	Director Policies
Indonesia	GWL – INA National Network	Tengku Surya Mihari	Executive Director
Laos	Community Health & Inclusion Association (CHias)	Viengkhone Souriyo	Executive Director
Mongolia	Youth for Health	Myagmardorj Dorjgotov Nyampurev Galsanjamts	Executive Director GF SKPA Project officer
Myanmar	Myanmar Youth Stars Network	Dr. Min Thet Phyto San	Network and Programme Coordinator
Nepal	Blue Diamond Society	Sanjay Sharma	Program Director
Pakistan	Dareecha Health Society	Muhammad Usman	Program Director
Pakistan	Khawaja Sira Society	Moon Ali	Director Programmes
Papua New Guinea	Key Population Consortium	Lesley Bola Maura Elaripe	National Coordinator from KP Consortium GF SKPA Project Officer
The Philippines	LoveYourself Inc.	Ronivin Pagtakhan, RN, MAN, PhD Ed John Oliver Corciega	Executive Director Program Manager
Vietnam	Lighthouse Social Enterprise & Lighthouse Clinic	Doan Thanh Tung	Executive Director
	APCOM	Midnight Poonkasetwattana	Executive Director

## About APCOM

APCOM is an Asia Pacific regional organization based in Bangkok, Thailand. It represents and works with a network of individuals and community-based organizations across 35 countries in the region. We focus on improving the health, rights and wellbeing of gay men, other MSM, and LGBTQI people across Asia and the Pacific region.

APCOM organization's technical expertise are embodied within the projects we have implemented. Through our experience and funding support from stakeholders, we bring diverse partners together to discuss and take actions on issues affecting the lives of vulnerable and marginalized key populations. Past and current projects included, but not limited to: [JumpStart](#), [WISDOM: Community Voices Strengthening](#), [FINANCE Inc.](#), [Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme \(MSA\)](#), [Sustainable HIV Financing in Transition \(SHIFT\)](#), [Enhancing MSM and Community Engagements with the Global Fund Processes](#), [Sustainability of HIV Services for Key Population in Asia \(SKPA\)](#).