



URGENT CALL FROM MYANMAR

A New Global Fund Strategy Grounded in Realities:
Human-centered Response to End the Epidemics

Yangon, 21 October 2021

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

The Communities express immediate and strong concerns regarding the attention and investments for gay men, other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in the regional and national HIV response. For the 2023-2028 Global Fund Strategy, it is imperative that it is grounded on lived realities of key populations and their communities which is also responsive to emerging needs. **The Global Fund must ensure that its new strategy and operational plan prioritize investment and support for gay men, other MSM and transgender people and emphasize inclusion and non-discrimination against the community.**

The current prioritization and investments towards programs targeting gay men, other MSM and transgender people in Myanmar is inadequate, ran short of minimum level of coverage and scale-up in required services. 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).

To further contribute to the strategy development process, we would like to put forward some practical country-specific considerations in effort to maximize impact on the response to HIV among gay men, other MSM and transgender people at the country level. We held a consultation with our communities and, based on the 2023-2028 Strategy Framework as approved by The Global Fund Board, we listed below points of recommendations:

In order to ‘Maximizing People-centered Integrated Systems for Health to Deliver Impact, Resilience and Sustainability’, the Global Fund must:

- Expand more digital health services and other innovative approaches to provide services for key population and youth at high risk of HIV;
- Understand the community needs and must focus on delivering the quality programme rather than focus on target orientated programme;
- Empower community led organizations and let the community take the lead to response HIV;
- Consider for funding allocations for urgent humanitarian aids especially in crisis situation happening in Myanmar;
- Integrate one stop services for key populations including HIV/sexual and reproductive health, mental health and providing service linkage.

In order to ‘Maximizing the Engagement and Leadership of Most Affected Communities to Leave No One Behind’, the Global Fund must:



- Support meaningful representation from community networks in high level meeting by providing technical support on documentation of the community needs/voices;
- Invest more funding on community-led interventions especially on HIV prevention;
- Provide funding support on capacity strengthening of community led organizations;
- Be flexible with requirements/agreements while partnership with community-led organizations;
- Tackle the gaps and challenges in order to put in place the role of community led organizations.

In order to 'Maximizing Health Equity, Gender Equality and Human Rights', the Global Fund must:

- Coordinate with the related key stakeholders to make the legal environment among Key Population and participate in law/policy reform process;
- Start provide funding support on the programme focusing on well-being of the Key Population such as mental health and psychosocial support, legal assistance, etc.;
- Promote the education for human right, HIV, sexual and reproductive health not only among key population but also among general population.

We truly hope that this initiative will help shape the 2023-2028 Global Fund Strategy that not only puts the community at the heart of the response, and that resources will be put into the community as well.

Yours sincerely,

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About Myanmar Youth Stars

Myanmar Youth Stars is a registered, national network working with and for the young key affected populations of HIV including men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, drug users and people living with HIV between the age of 15 and 30. MYS is currently closely working with more than 1,200 young key population members at 18 townships across the country in terms of: 1. Advocating the rights of young key populations related with HIV and sexual and reproductive health (SRH); 2. Networking; 3. Capacity building and; 4. Community led research since later 2012 in Myanmar.

The vision of the network is “all youth who belong to four key affected populations are healthy, capable, and equal in dignity and rights in Myanmar society”. The mission of the organization is to 1. Ensure everyone from four key affected populations has an equal right regarding HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH); 2. Enhance the capacity of youth through networking, coordination and advocacy.

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 is 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).