

Alarmist media reports ignore that Global Fund resources are delivering tremendous results in the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria

February 7, 2011 – Geneva, Switzerland. Following the publication of several media reports which seriously distort the extent of fraud discovered in grants financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the International AIDS Society (IAS) urges all donors and governments to continue their funding.

The Global Fund is a unique and innovative financing instrument which attracts, manages and disburses resources to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The fund is the most effective mechanism through which to disburse large amounts of resources rapidly and is credited with saving millions of lives. It is recognized as such by the international community. When the Global Fund was first created in 2002, only 40,000 people living with HIV in low and middle-income countries were receiving life saving anti-retroviral drugs. By December 2009, Global Fund-supported programmes were providing antiretroviral therapy to 2.5 million individuals in 104 low and middle-income countries, and the Global Fund Board had approved proposals totaling USD 19.2 billion and disbursed over USD 10 billion for HIV, TB and malaria control efforts to over 140 countries.

A distinguishing feature of the Global Fund is its strict and transparent auditing system, and its openness when it uncovers corruption. “Last week’s reports on this subject contained no real news, and only referred to the Global Fund’s own published audits which openly acknowledged that sums of money had been misappropriated,” commented Julio Montaner, IAS Past President. “It would be a bitter irony if the Global Fund loses funding because of these reports, only for the same resources to be directed towards other multinational aids agencies who face the same challenges when it comes to fraud, but who may not be as transparent in their reporting. “

“All fraud is unacceptable and international financing mechanisms such as the Global Fund must work rigorously to ensure that funds are not misappropriated,” said Prof. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, International AIDS Society (IAS) President-elect and 2008 Nobel Laureate for Medicine. “But we must keep in mind that the Global Fund is known for consistently taking strong and firm action to recover losses whenever they are discovered.” Indeed, the amount of money misspent represents less than 0.3 per cent of the total amount disbursed to countries by the Global Fund so far. Of each 100 US dollars disbursed by the Fund, 30 cents only have been misused, and 99.7 dollars have been used the right way, saving lives and increasing access to efficient treatments. Examples exist to show that the Fund has acted promptly and firmly and suspended further granting to governments found to have misused funds.

“The misuse of small fractions of Global Fund grants, while extremely serious, must be put into perspective and examined within the context of the complex challenges and emergencies that all international organizations face when dispersing large amounts of resources,” said Elly Katabira, IAS President. “Withdrawing donations and freezing funding to the Global Fund will not only condemn millions of people who are not involved in the corruption to terrible fates, but will also send the dangerous message that organizations aiming to achieve best practice in transparency and accountability will be punished. The Global Fund should be supported and empowered to continue its work, not condemned for its efforts to root out corruption and improve its results.”

About the IAS

The International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world's leading independent association of HIV professionals, with over 16,000 members from more than 196 countries working at all levels of the global response to AIDS. Our members include researchers from all disciplines, clinicians, public health and community

practitioners on the frontlines of the epidemic, as well as policy and programme planners. The IAS is the custodian of the biennial International AIDS Conference and lead organizer of the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention, which will be held in Rome, Italy in July 2011.

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