

## EIGHTEENTH INVESTORS GROUP MEETING REPORT

The Investors Group (IG) of the Global Financing Facility (GFF) convened a meeting on June 27, 2024, virtually.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISION POINTS

The Investors Group (IG):

- approved the seventeenth Investors Group (IG17) meeting report.
- endorsed the climate and health approach to be integrated into the current GFF strategy.
- agreed to hold deep dive sessions on the evaluation and on health financing before the fall 2024 IG meeting.
- agreed to create two working groups to accomplish the following: (1) assess the roles and responsibilities of the IG and ensure the group is maximizing its impact; and (2) assess the civil society and youth engagement and provide guidance on the mechanism for scaling up direct support as part of the new phase of this agenda.

### OPENING

The IG co-chairs, Dr. Lia Tadesse and Pascale Grotenhuis, director-general for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Netherlands, opened the meeting and thanked and recognized the participants, including country representatives from ministries of health as well as the newly rotated civil society organization (CSO) and youth representatives. It was also noted that this would be Dr. Lia's final meeting as chair, and Dr. Lia's exceptional leadership and dedication to the GFF and the rights of women, children and adolescents was appreciated and recognized.

Juan Pablo Uribe, director of the GFF, spoke on the relevance of the GFF within the World Bank, including the recent commitment to reach 1.5 billion people with quality health care over the next five years. He underscored the role GFF can play in reaching women, children and adolescents as part of this commitment and also the close engagement with the Gender team on the recently launched World Bank gender strategy, which includes key actions on SRHR. Second, Juan Pablo spoke on the broader partnership and the opportunities to ensure we recognize the key role of the countries - ministers, civil societies and communities and how to collectively support. Lastly he spoke to the need to continue to evolve the GFF Partnership's support to countries, learning and adapting and that the upcoming evaluation and IG working group will be an opportunity to take stock.

### STRATEGY UPDATE

Luc Laviolette, head of the GFF Secretariat, highlighted the ongoing efforts, results, and opportunities for the GFF, including:

- Recent approval of second-round grants (US\$10 million grant for Mali and a US\$50 million grant for Nigeria, with alignment from several partners) and additional second-round grants over the next 18 months.

- Two pilot approaches that have been introduced—the Challenge Fund for accelerating impact through innovations and multi-sectoral work, and the Joint Financing Framework for aligning financing with World Bank projects.
- The external evaluation underway, guided by a steering committee, focusing on the country engagement model, operational structure and results.
- Analytical work being conducted to inform the next strategy period, including climate and health, the GFF model in fragile environments, health system strengthening, and GFF role in the alignment agenda.
- Active collaborations with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and other organizations, and engagement in initiatives such as community health worker partnerships and advocacy efforts. Luc highlighted the importance of these partnerships for reducing fragmentation, including collaborations with UNFPA on family planning, Gavi on immunization, and the Global Fund on malaria and child mortality, as examples.
- The Lusaka Agenda was highlighted as a key process for ensuring alignment and coordinating efforts among Global Fund, Gavi and GFF while ensuring this is responding to country demand and priorities.

**The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- IG members highlighted the ongoing efforts, challenges, and importance of coordination and transparency in advancing maternal and child health and addressing gender inequalities, along with the role the IG has played in supporting alignment efforts.
- IG members highlighted the need to re-energize the ministerial network, including to help shape the global agenda and also share experiences between countries.
- IG members affirmed their dedication to the Lusaka Agenda and would like to know how to work together at subnational level as this is where the work is happening and proposed to add this as a priority agenda item for the next IG meeting.

**GFF Secretariat response:**

- The secretariat will share the nomination process for the Lusaka Agenda working group and committed to providing an update and agenda item at the next IG.
- The secretariat confirmed it will be convening the ministerial network more regularly, including ahead of each IG meeting.

**GENDER EQUALITY**

Charlotte Nielsen, senior health specialist for the GFF Secretariat, presented an update on the GFF’s gender work. She highlighted the evolution from a “[Roadmap for Advancing Gender Equality](#)” to a mainstreamed approach with a dedicated strategic direction in the current GFF strategy 2021–25. Key investments were shared, such as analytical and technical support to demonstrate the relationship between gender inequality and poor health outcomes; utilization and quality of gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation data and analytics; support for gender-transformative legal and policy reforms (for example, legal gender specialist within the GFF Secretariat, partnerships with UNFPA, the WHO’s Human Reproduction Program (HRP), and the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law Unit); strengthened engagement with CSOs and youth and women-led organizations; supportive environment to empower women and girls as leaders by generating evidence; and strengthened engagement beyond the health sector.

**The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- IG members discussed the current backlash on gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) agendas that point to a greater need to be aligned and coordinated across all partners. The IG underscored that the backlash means now more than ever it is critical to ensure continued support to countries working across various contexts.
- IG expressed the linkages with CSO and youth in particular, who have a clear role to play particularly in the current environment.
- IG members were pleased to see implementation tracking through the KPI but emphasized that the lessons emerging from the KPIs need to be translated into shifts and clearly communicated.
- IG members also expressed an interest to have SRHR as a standing agenda item given the mandate of the GFF.

**GFF Secretariat response:**

- The secretariat is integrating emerging findings into implementation and will make a concerted effort to communicate the shifts based on lessons, as this will also be relevant for other partners.
- The secretariat appreciated the need to ensure space on the agenda for SRHR and will make this an agenda item in the fall in addition to a deep dive on SRRH in the lead up.

**HEALTH FINANCING**

Cicely Thomas, lead for the health financing workstream at the GFF Secretariat, presented the evolution of the GFF health financing portfolio, which aims to increase equitable access to quality RMNCAH-N services across the GFF portfolio and support reforms to ensure more resilient, equitable and sustainable health financing systems. She explained that the GFF has refined its health financing approach, which centers around three main objectives: (1) ensuring adequacy of financing (for operational, human resources, and drugs and commodity costs) and recalibrating the focus on domestic resource mobilization (DRM); (2) scaling-up resource mobilization and expenditure tracking (RMET) support building on lessons learned; (3) doubling down on the equity and gender lens and ensuring that primary health care financing is in service of women, children and adolescents.

**The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- IG members stressed the importance of health financing data use and uptake in countries and were pleased to hear this is a focus of the GFF work.
- IG members noted the importance of making the connection between the GFF's focus on ensuring equitable and sustainable resources for RMNCAH-N and the Lusaka and Alignment agendas.
- Youth and CSO representatives emphasized their interest and the importance of actively including CSOs and youth-led organizations (YLOs) in work around health financing, particularly in the area of RMET and budget/DRM advocacy and accountability.
- Several IG members emphasized the importance of ensuring primary health care (PHC) resources reach the subnational level.
- There was some discussion about the global macro fiscal context, and the concern that many countries may have limited space to maintain and increase their domestic spending on health. The IG requested more discussion on how this impacts DRM advocacy efforts and how to balance short term and long term agendas in this area.
- The IG also shared a desire for more information about successes, challenges, and lessons learned across the GFF health financing portfolio.
- IG members also requested further description of how the GFF works with other partners in the area of health financing, particularly how it complements the work of the World Bank HNP global practice.

- Several partners echoed support for the GFF health financing agenda and noted areas where GFF, GAVI, and Global Fund are collaborating on RMET, ensuring health financing data availability and use, and broader public financial management reforms.

#### **Action**

- The GFF Secretariat will set up a health financing deep dive (to include lessons learned, country needs, complementary work with the World Bank, etc.) with the IG technical alternates in the lead-up to the fall 2024 IG meeting.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

Maty Dia, senior civil society and youth engagement specialist for the GFF Secretariat, presented on the CSO and youth engagement framework and progress to date. She provided a stocktaking of the CSO and youth engagement framework, including the nongovernmental organization (NGO) host organization, Joint Learning Agenda, and ADLAB. This included key results and emerging lessons as the NGO host project closes.

#### **The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- The IG welcomed GFF commitment and evolution of the CSO and youth engagement. IG members underscored that integrating youth and CSOs into GFF investment case (IC) processes is critical and welcomed a focus on strengthening capacity and ensuring funding and duration of grants is commensurate with expected results.
- The IG requested the secretariat to consider as part of the next phase of CSO and youth engagement how best to (1) ensure the CSO and youth engagement is closer to projects and also (2) leveraging other existing mechanisms and efforts globally and in-country.
- The IG members emphasized the need to find ways to ensure continuity of engagement with CSOs during the bridge period with the NGO-host project closing and the launch of the next phase of engagement.
- The IG expressed the need for civil society and youth to engage in the Lusaka Agenda and discuss further at the next IG meeting.

#### **Action:**

- The secretariat will form a time-bound working group to help shape the next phase of civil society and youth engagement, building on lessons and leveraging current opportunities. This taskforce will report back to the IG.
- In the interim period, a bridge coordinating role will be implemented and additional details shared with the IG.

### **CLIMATE AND HEALTH APPROACH**

Supriya Madhavan, lead for the RMNCAH-N and gender workstream at the GFF Secretariat, presented the work of the Climate and Health Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Following up on the IG17 decision point to develop a climate and health approach for the GFF—which will be integrated into the current GFF strategy. The main four key focus areas for TAG rely on the following actions:

- Integrate consideration of climate change factors into all aspects of ICs.
- Prioritize and institutionalize consideration of women, children and adolescents in World Bank-supported climate and health efforts.

- Incorporate climate sensitivity and responsiveness in the GFF's support to data generation and use, monitoring, and results systems.
- Align with GFF partner initiatives to prioritize climate actions within RMNCAH-N programs.

**The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- IG members appreciated the consultative process put in place to develop the paper.
- IG members emphasized the importance of clearly stating the GFF value-add, through its model and impact on women, children and adolescents, in complementarity with the World Bank.
- IG members recommended that the GFF join the Alliance for Action on Climate Change and Health (ATACH) to share knowledge and enhance technical and political cooperation.
- IG members suggested some topics could be strengthened, such as nutrition or adaptation and emergency plans.
- IG members expressed the importance of including CSOs and YLOs in climate and health vulnerability assessment (CHVA) processes.

**Action:**

- The GFF Secretariat will share a clear timeline for integrating the climate and health actions and keeping the IG updated on a regularly basis.

**Decision:**

- The IG members endorsed the climate and health approach paper.

## IG DISCUSSION

Luc Laviolette presented an overview of the IG, including its key role and evolution. Due to a lack of time, the session focused on agreeing on next steps for the process that will identify how to maximize the impact of the IG.

**The IG expressed the following feedback:**

- IG partners recognized the importance of the IG and its value to the partnership, acknowledging that it is important to discuss its functions in the context of the Lusaka Agenda. Further, members agreed that there is an opportunity for greater impact through the IG.
- IG members supported creating a working group to review the role of the IG, especially with a view to strengthening the advisory role to the TFC.
- IG members agreed it's an appropriate time to take stock and go into further level of detail as a parallel process to the evaluation which has a much broader mandate on looking at the GFF model. There will need to be a concerted effort to find the right balance between country and global level engagement and participation to maximize impact.

**Action:**

- The GFF Secretariat will move forward with creating a time-bound working group to identify how to further maximize IG impact.
- The GFF secretariat will also prepare a paper on alignment that will be presented at the Fall IG and serve as an important input into: (1) the discussion for the GFF's role in the alignment agenda, including as part of the Lusaka Agenda; (2) considerations for the next GFF strategy.

## **KEY CLOSING MESSAGES AND CONFIRMATION OF DECISION POINTS**

The chair closed the meeting by thanking all partners for joining and their active participation, ending with a summary of the key outcomes and decision points from IG meeting, as outlined in this report.

<https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/news/governance-announcement/gff-governing-bodies-take-decisions-help-accelerate-progress>

All IG meeting materials including minutes will be made available in French and English on the GFF website:

<https://globalfinancingfacility.org>.