

**145<sup>th</sup> IPU GENERAL ASSEMBLY: GENERAL DEBATE REMARKS FROM  
THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA  
October 2022**

Good morning honorable Members of Parliament. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is the largest international funder for tuberculosis and malaria, and the second largest funder for HIV. We are also the largest multi-lateral grant funder for health systems strengthening, and the primary funder for all of the non-vaccine components of the COVID-19 response in low and middle-income countries – including tests, treatments and personal protective equipment for health workers.

Gender equity and removing gender-related barriers to accessing health services is essential for progress against infectious diseases. This is especially true for HIV. Here in sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women are disproportionately impacted. While young women ages 15 to 24 are 10 percent of the population in this region, they represent 25 percent of HIV infections.

Meeting this challenge through investments that advance gender equity and meet the needs of young women at risk for HIV is a critical component of the new strategy for 2023 to 2028 that our Board approved last year.

To keep young women and girls HIV free, the Global Fund supports programs that consider the many aspects of their lives that can protect them from, or make them more vulnerable to HIV. Between 2018 and 2020, Global Fund investments in HIV prevention and testing for adolescent girls and young women increased by 107% within 13 priority countries where the HIV burden is highest: Botswana, Cameroon, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Each country and community tailors its approach to its own needs, but key elements of a comprehensive package of services include:

Adolescent friendly HIV prevention interventions and comprehensive sexuality education.

Scaling up HIV treatment programs tailored to meet the needs of adolescent girls and young women living with HIV.

Keeping girls in school.

Providing safe spaces for girls to discuss challenges and raise concerns.

Equipping young women to be economically independent.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

Ensuring adolescent girls and young women can participate in program design and implementation.

The Global Fund also recognizes that ending HIV for adolescent girls and young women also means working with boys and men to transform cultural and social norms that continue to drive infections. This includes ensuring that men at high risk of HIV infection are tested and supported to start and stay on treatment.

Failing to provide the funding needed to address this challenge would have grave consequences. Projections show that the number of women in the 15 to 24 age group in sub-Saharan Africa will grow by an estimated 40 percent over the next decade. Without the political will to increase health and development budgets, we risk dramatic increases in HIV in the coming years. Parliamentarians are the key to building and sustaining that political will. Your commitment and hard work to meet this challenge is what will finally bring the HIV free world we all want.