

## 148<sup>th</sup> IPU GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### REMARKS FROM THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS & MALARIA FOR GENERAL DEBATE: “*PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY: BUILDING BRIDGES FOR PEACE & UNDERSTANDING*”

March 26, 2024

Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon honorable Members of Parliament. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is a Permanent Observer at the Assembly, and we are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this general debate.

We are the largest multilateral grant funder for health systems strengthening, including building stronger laboratory networks, supply chains, surveillance systems, and health data systems. Our new grant cycle began this year, with over 120 countries eligible to receive funds. This was made possible by the success of our 7<sup>th</sup> Replenishment, which many of the countries represented at this Assembly supported.

Countries today are grappling with a web of interconnected crises, from the enduring impact of COVID-19 and the risk of future pandemics to climate change, conflicts, mounting debt, food insecurity, and the erosion of human rights. All of these challenges exacerbate the difficulties of fighting infectious diseases, particularly imperiling the most vulnerable populations.

The concept note for this debate rightly highlights that peace is a fundamental condition for addressing global development challenges such as the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes SDG 3 – health and well-being for all.

As we are witnessing in too many parts of the world, armed conflict severely harms access to the health care services everyone deserves. Often, health facilities and medical supplies are destroyed. For example, in Ukraine more than 1,200 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed since the beginning of the war, including three tuberculosis hospitals.

In addition, health care workers risk death and injury. Populations are displaced. Malnutrition weakens immune systems. Lack of food makes it difficult or impossible to take certain medications.

The impacts are devastating. The sad reality is that typically during armed conflict more people die from disease than from bullets and bombs.

To provide extra assistance during periods of crisis, the Global Fund has disbursed over US\$130 million from our emergency fund. In recent years, this has included additional funding to Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, among other countries. These funds have been provided over and above the core grant funding each of these countries receives during our regular three-year grant cycle. Many other countries experiencing armed conflict are also receiving grant funds as part of our new grant cycle.

These funds help address significant needs:

- Generators for laboratories
- Mobile health clinics
- Medicines and diagnostic equipment.

- Support for community-led organizations that help displaced people safely access health services and needed medications
- Food to combat malnutrition
- Locating appropriate accommodations for patients with infectious conditions

The needs are enormous.

The Global Fund will continue our ongoing work to build strong and resilient systems for health that address both diseases killing people now like HIV, TB, malaria and COVID, as well as the future pandemic threats we all know will come. But progress will always be severely threatened where there is armed conflict and aggression, and where efforts to sustain peace fail.