

**General Debate Remarks from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria**  
**IPU General Assembly – November 29, 2021**  
**Delivered by Scott Boule, Senior Specialist for Parliamentary Affairs**

Mr. President and honorable Members of Parliament, it is a privilege to have this opportunity to address you today. My name is Scott Boule and I serve as Senior Specialist for Parliamentary Affairs at the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria, which has Permanent Observer status with the IPU. We are grateful to be able participate in this Assembly, including as part of the IPU's Advisory Group on Health.

This year marks the Global Fund's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the programs we fund have helped save over 44 million lives. Over the past two decades, deaths from HIV have decreased by 65 percent, deaths from malaria by 45 percent, and deaths from TB by 28 percent. We are also the largest multi-lateral grant funder for health systems strengthening, which includes investing in laboratories, surveillance, supply chains, data systems, training health workers, including community health workers, and other vital aspects of pandemic response.

These results are possible because of sustained political support from partner countries worldwide, including most of the countries represented in this Assembly.

But the impact of COVID-19 has been devastating for the communities we serve, particularly in terms of access to testing and treatment for TB, and to prevention services and testing for HIV.

As the concept note for this general debate states, the failures we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic have further aggravated existing challenges to the functioning of democracy. One of the questions it poses is to what extent can parliaments that are more representative, including of women, youth and other underrepresented groups, enhance trust?

Ensuring equitable access to health is certainly part of the answer. But as we have all seen, unequal access to tools to combat COVID-19 has led to a catastrophic number of deaths and fueled the emergence of new variants that have allowed this pandemic to continue much longer.

When COVID-19 struck, the Global Fund responded quickly, and so far we have provided over \$4.1 billion to assist with the response in more than 100 countries worldwide. We are now the primary channel for grant support to low- and middle-income countries for all of the non-vaccine components of the COVID response, including tests, therapeutics like medical oxygen, and personal protective equipment to protect health workers.

But much more needs to be done, and our funding for this work is running out. Sustained investments in health systems can show citizens that government is working. Building back better creates a real opportunity to strengthen democracy, but sustained investments in health must be a higher political priority everywhere.

In the fall of 2022, the United States will host our 7<sup>th</sup> Replenishment where we will raise funds for the next three-year grant cycle. A successful outcome will be critical to get back on track to end the existing pandemics of HIV, TB and malaria by the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals target. It will also be critical for building stronger health systems that are prepared for the future pandemic threats we know will come.