**DRAFT**

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**From Human Rights Principles**

**to Human Rights Programs**

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Social Forum**

**Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the HIV epidemic and other communicable diseases and epidemics**

Panel: Leaving no one behind:

Discrimination and the realization of the right to health

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Thank you for inviting me to speak at this forum where we come together to confirm the critical importance of human rights in the response to HIV and indeed to any health condition. We at the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria are in the midst of a major initiative to make human rights real in the fight against these diseases. It is groundbreaking work. For the first time in any fight against any disease, we are making available significant funding, in fact millions of dollars, and significant support to scale up concrete programs to remove human rights-related barriers to health services in national responses to the three diseases.

We do this out of principle because it is the right thing to do, and we do it out pragmatism because it is fully necessary for our grants to be effective. These programs to remove human rights-related barriers to health services ensure that the medicines and services reach those who need them and that in fact no one is left behind.

The HIV epidemic and the courageous activism by those living with HIV have turned on its head the public health model of the provision of health services to passive beneficiaries. More condoms, more pills, more bednets will not overcome HIV, TB and malaria. Nor can governments and the international community be the sole arbiters of these goods.

Rather, those affected must be able to demand, receive and use what they need in ways that works for them in their lives. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the 3 diseases. We have realised that without human rights, neither the Global Fund nor our partners can be effective agents as we each play our roles in overcoming these diseases. Human rights empower us all. But how to make human rights more than principles and inspirational words? We hope to do so by turning human rights into funded and implemented programmatic responses.

The Global Fund has made it a strategic objective to increase investments in programs to remove human rights-related barriers to health services. These programs attack stigma and discrimination, teach people their rights related to health, provide people with legal support, reduce the harmful gender norms and gender based violence that put women and girls at risk, improve attitudes and practices of health care workers and police, and make laws and regulations protective of health. They are the programs recognized and promoted by many in this room. In this regard, I pay tribute to people living with HIV, TB and malaria; to sex workers; people who use drugs; LGBT people; and to UNAIDS, Stop TB, UNDP, the OHCHR, and many others – all of whom have helped to define these programs.

In addition to making support of these programs a strategic priority for the Global Fund, we are supporting them in the following ways: We have convened TB and malaria experts to define which human rights programs are effective in the context of those epidemics. We have issued guidance on the content and evidence of effectiveness of these programs. We have made it a requirement that all countries include them in their grant proposals, but have also selected 20 countries that are receiving intensive support to scale up these programs. In these countries, we are conducting baseline assessments that will assist the countries to work toward comprehensive responses to human rights-related barriers to health services; and will also allow us to measure effectiveness and build the evidence base. Finally, we have set aside a catalytic fund of 45 million dollars to which countries can apply if they match, on a one to one basis, the amount for human right programs requested in their grant proposals. Thus, the Global Fund is potentially making available 90 million dollars for concrete programs to remove human rights-related barriers to health services.

The actual amount and the actual impact will of course depend on countries’ willingness and ability to apply for and implement these programs. Here I wish to underline that we cannot do this alone. We need your help. We need civil society to press for these funds and programs and be key implementers. We need governments to be willing to do things differently to be more effective. We need the UN system and other technical partners to support countries to apply for and scale up the programs. We need other donors to help fill in the gaps that will still remain even if all the funds are utilised.

It is a big challenge. But so are the stigma and discrimination; the punitive laws and practices; and the gender inequality, gender-based violence, poverty and inequality that continue to make all our efforts in health only partially effective. I hope you can join us in our work to go from human rights principles to human right programs supporting people to be strong and effective players in determining their own health and wellbeing. It is the way forward in health, joining health to social justice and human rights.

Thank you.