Belgium and the Global Fund

“Public health challenges, such as infant mortality, maternal mortality, and the fight against HIV and AIDS and malaria demonstrate the importance of effective and sustainable health systems and access to medicines and vaccines. It is therefore important to be in line with the development strategies put in place by our country partners, to ensure together that resources are allocated in the most effective manner and to share a political commitment to deliver sustainable results.” – Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Post and Telecommunications

Ending AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Smart, effective health investments through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria have saved 17 million lives since 2002, expanding opportunity and achieving greater social justice for families and communities worldwide. These efforts put the Global Fund partnership on track to save 22 million lives by the end of 2016.

Belgium as a Partner

Belgium has been an active partner of the Global Fund since the establishment of the organization in 2002. To date, it has financially contributed more than €212 million. For the period 2014-2016, Belgium’s contribution was also the largest compared to previous years, €57 million – a 6.5 percent increase over the preceding funding cycle 2010-2013.

Belgium also takes part in the governance of the Global Fund. It is represented by the European Commission on the Global Fund Board as well as on the Ethics and Governance, and Audit and Finance Committees. In addition, Belgium participates in two Country Coordinating Mechanisms (the committee of local community, government and health representatives that develop and guide Global Fund-supported programs in a country) – in Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Development cooperation continues to be a high priority for the Belgian government. In 2015, it invested US$1.9 billion in net official development assistance, which represented 0.42 percent of its gross national income (GNI) – above the average contributions from members of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee.
Since 2012, Benin and its main health partners, including the Global Fund, have committed to implementing a Results-based Financing (RBF) national health strategy as a critical approach to strengthening the country’s health system. Results-based Financing (RBF) provides funding for programs only after previously agreed upon results have been achieved, which creates an incentive to deliver results and improve program quality. Benin is divided into 34 health zones, of which five receive funding from the Belgian Development Agency (BTC) and 19 from the Global Fund – enabling the implementation of RBF in all areas of the country. RBF contributes to better health outcomes, facilitates access to health services by the poorest population, and strengthens institutional support with an improvement in planning, budgeting, and monitoring. According to Benin’s Ministry of Health, approximately 2.5 million people have benefited from this strategy.

Priority Areas of the Partnership

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights: The Global Fund partnership finances programs that ensure equitable access for all people to sexual and reproductive health services. Partners like Belgium are strong advocates for the Global Fund’s approach of integrating sexual and reproductive health and rights with HIV interventions and more broadly, for linking reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health interventions with HIV, TB and malaria programs.

Human Rights: The Global Fund works with key populations that lack access to health care due to stigma, discrimination or gender inequalities. It has built human rights-based solutions into its strategy and supports countries to expand human rights programs to remove related barriers to health care and to empower communities to take charge of their health. Five human rights standards must be followed in the implementation of every Global Fund grant. This principle is perfectly aligned with Belgium’s international leading role in the fight against human rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Standing up against discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons and promoting and defending their rights is one of the priorities of Belgium’s foreign policy.

Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health: Countries with stronger systems for health are able to respond quicker to health threats. The Global Fund and its partners work to remove barriers to health and make health care more financially sustainable, affordable and accessible through initiatives to expand health insurance and by supporting countries in their progress towards universal health coverage. The Global Fund’s core mission can only be achieved with stronger systems for health, including improved facilities, health care, training for health workers, information management, and access; and stronger community support and response mechanisms. Global Fund investments in the treatment and prevention of HIV, TB, and malaria don’t just improve the response to those diseases – they improve countries’ overall health systems, boosting the quality of care, data-tracking and services. Forty percent of Global Fund investments go towards improving and strengthening systems for health. The universal right to health and healthcare is the principle that underlies Belgian Development Cooperation concerning health. Belgium believes that developing an effective and sustainable health care system is the best way to ensure this right.

National Ownership: The Global Fund finances programs in line with national health strategies of the partner countries. Effectively stimulating domestic investments in health is an essential component of moving toward transition and sustainability. Through a collective effort by the partnership, domestic financing commitments are up by US$5.9 billion, spurred in part by co-financing requirements by the Global Fund. Our approach is in line with Belgium’s principle of sustainable economic development.

Reaching People Most in Need: The Global Fund invests to achieve the greatest impact for people most in need. Most of the programs supported by the organization are in low-income countries with a high burden of disease and where national health programs are least able to fully support treatment and care. Belgium is a strategic partner in this context, as it is committed to investing at least 50 percent of its official development assistance in the least developed countries.

Seizing the Momentum

Through collective global commitment and unwavering support from partners like Belgium, we have proven we can force the three diseases into retreat. But we can’t stop now. So many more lives are still at risk that we must seize the momentum, embrace ambition and move faster to end HIV, TB and malaria as epidemics. The Global Fund is honored to have Belgium as a strong partner to help achieve this milestone.

About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a 21st-century organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. As a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases, the Global Fund mobilizes and invests nearly US$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in more than 100 countries. The Global Fund operating costs are just 2.3 percent of grants under management, reflecting an exceptionally high degree of efficiency. By challenging barriers and embracing innovative approaches, we are working together to better serve people affected by the diseases.

June 2016
theglobalfund.org