The Republic of Korea and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Twenty years of partnership between the Republic of Korea and the Global Fund have played an important role in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria and in building a healthier, safer and more equitable world.

Ending AIDS, TB and malaria
Health investments through the Global Fund have saved more than 44 million lives. Global Fund-supported programs have turned the tide in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria, strengthening entire communities and tackling inequalities. Since the Global Fund was established in 2002, the annual death rate across the three diseases has fallen by over half (56%) in countries where we invest.

Unprecedented global cooperation over 20 years has resulted in annual death rates decreasing by:

- **74%** from AIDS-related illnesses
- **51%** from tuberculosis
- **47%** from malaria

Our partnership
South Korea has supported the Global Fund since its creation, investing US$61.7 million to date. Global health is a growing priority for South Korea's international cooperation agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the "South Korean model" of pandemic response, providing opportunities for increased leadership in global health and health diplomacy. South Korea emphasizes the importance of health as a human right and an essential factor for socioeconomic development, with a particular focus on equitable access to global public goods and collective engagement to keep the world safe from infectious disease threats.

South Korea joined the Global Fund Board in 2018 to represent the Additional Public Donors constituency – since then, they have been a dynamic contributor in shaping Global Fund governance policies.

South Korea is one of the largest suppliers of diagnostic tests to the Global Fund. From 2019 up to the first quarter of 2022, South Korea provided about US$460 million in products, among which 87% were diagnostic tests and 50% were COVID-19 diagnostic tests.

South Korea’s pledges and contributions to the Global Fund, 2001-2022 (in € million)
In global health, the Republic of Korea focuses on building sustainable health systems and improving access to quality health care for all. Korea joins the Global Fund in a commitment to achieving universal health coverage in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Priority areas of our partnership**

The Global Fund is the largest multilateral provider of grants for strengthening systems for health. Over the 2021-2023 funding cycle, we are investing US$4.9 billion, or US$1.5 billion a year, in formal and community health systems through our core grants and our COVID-19 response – about one-third of our total investments. This includes improving procurement and supply chains; strengthening data systems and data use; building an adequate health workforce; strengthening community responses and systems; and promoting more integrated service delivery so people can receive comprehensive care throughout their lives.

**Resilient and sustainable systems for health**

As the leading multilateral agency in the fight against the world’s deadliest infectious diseases – HIV, TB, and malaria – the Global Fund partnership is uniquely placed to work with partners to support countries to prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics. A study published in The Lancet found that over one-third of Global Fund investments to fight the three diseases contribute to advance core components of health security.

**Pandemic preparedness and response**

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**Diseases know no borders, and the COVID-19 pandemic makes clear that our global health security is only as strong as the world’s weakest health system.**

**Strong, inclusive formal and community health systems built for the fight against existing diseases including HIV, TB and malaria are critical to making the world battle-ready for the next pandemic. We have seen this during COVID-19: Many low- and middle-income countries used the same laboratories, supply chains, data systems, diagnostics tools, health workers and community systems built to fight HIV, TB and malaria as the foundation of their response to the new pandemic.**

**Fostering innovation**

Scientific progress and innovative ideas driven by both public and private investment are unlocking improvements in disease prevention, treatment and care. The Global Fund partnership draws on the best innovations from across sectors while stimulating new innovations for more rapid progress and greater impact. HIV self-testing is a vital tool to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the fight against HIV and scale up efforts to protect services from future pandemics or other disruptions. HIV self-testing empowers people who otherwise may not get tested with an option that is safe, confidential and convenient. Between 2021 and 2023, the Global Fund will invest US$60 million in HIV self-testing – a fourfold increase compared to what was invested in the previous three years.

To fight TB, the Global Fund has supported the roll-out of bidirectional testing, where people are simultaneously screened and tested for TB and COVID-19. Identifying people with TB and COVID-19 is a crucial step toward ending these diseases as public health threats. In the future, it is likely this approach will be expanded to other diseases.

To respond to malaria, the Global Fund and Unitaid have each invested US$33 million from 2018 to 2022 to introduce new insecticide-treated nets to fight malaria-carrying mosquitoes. The New Nets Project is meant to safeguard the gains we have made against malaria and use new tools to reach the goal of ending the disease as a public health threat.

**Tackling antimicrobial resistance**

Antimicrobial resistance – when organisms develop resistance to antimicrobial drugs – is one of the biggest threats to our future global health and economic security. Deaths from drug-resistant TB account for about one-third of all antimicrobial resistance deaths worldwide. The Global Fund provides 77% of international financing for TB and is a major source of funding for the drug-resistant TB response in low- and middle-income countries.

In the Greater Mekong, the Global Fund partnership is tackling the emergence of drug-resistant malaria, which threatens a devastating setback for the region and a major shock to health security.

The Global Fund is also putting a larger focus on resistance to HIV drugs by expanding the newest treatment regimens that are more effective, cheaper, and less prone to inciting resistance.

**Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**

The Global Fund remains committed to supporting the health of people in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The Global Fund has invested over US$109 million to fight TB and malaria in the country since 2010. The Global Fund currently has one active grant in DPRK to contribute to the fight against TB and malaria in the country.

**The Philippines: Adapting TB Programs to Face the Challenge of COVID-19**

The Philippines quickly stepped up to adapt its TB program to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. In fact, the Philippines was one of the first countries to develop a strong comprehensive TB adaptive plan, which has served as a model for other countries. During the pandemic, the Department of Health’s National Tuberculosis Control Program began allowing patients to bring home a one-month supply of medicines. TB mitigation interventions have helped scale up implementation of digital adherence tools. These tools included the use of video-observed therapy and digital pill boxes that reminded patients to take their medication. The shift to home-based treatment had a big impact – there was a significant improvement in patient adherence and patient treatment outcomes. The Global Fund’s COVID-19 Response Mechanism funding also supported the expansion of testing strategies and roving mobile clinics, bringing TB services closer to patients.

**About the Global Fund**

The Global Fund invests more than US$4 billion a year to defeat HIV, TB and malaria and ensure a healthier, safer, equitable future for all. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have invested an additional US$4.3 billion to fight the new pandemic and reinforce systems for health. We unite the world to find solutions that have the most impact, and we take them to scale worldwide.

It’s working. Together, we have saved 44 million lives. We won’t stop until the job is finished.

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