

Brussels, 14 September 2020

To: Johan Van Overtveldt, Chair of the Committee on Budgets; Margarida Marques and Jan Olbrycht, MFF rapporteurs

Cc: Tomas Tobé, Chair of the Development Committee; Maria Arena, Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee

**Subject: Reversing cuts to the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument and its thematic pillar**

We are writing to you as organisations working on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to alert you on the cuts made by the European Council to the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), particularly its thematic pillar. We request your support in reversing these cuts and in protecting the thematic envelope, which is crucial to maintaining the EU's longstanding commitment to human rights and global health.

The thematic pillar is divided into four sub-programmes, including Global Challenges, Civil Society Organisations and Human Rights and Democracy, which are all critical to global health. In the current context characterized by a global COVID-19 pandemic, the weakening of multilateralism, the decline of human rights and shrinking civic space, these sub-programmes require increased support.

Global Challenges hosts funding for global health initiatives and actors, many of which have partnered with the EU in responding to COVID-19. This includes the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria. Since its inception, the EU has shown unwavering support for the Global Fund, which has been critical in helping countries alleviate the dramatic burden of these three diseases. However, the COVID-19 outbreak threatens the progress of the past decades. For instance, according to WHO and UNAIDS, a six-month disruption in HIV treatment could result in an additional 500,000 AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa alone by the end of 2021, bringing the region back to 2008 AIDS mortality levels.

We estimate that in order to sustain the EU's commitment to end HIV, TB and malaria, at least €1.45 billion of the Global Challenges budget would need to be set aside for the Global Fund alone. While this level of funding for the Global Fund is absolutely necessary, Global Challenges also hosts funding for other important health initiatives, partnerships outside of the health sector and global and transregional actions. Therefore, we are convinced that the level of funding of the thematic pillar agreed by the European Council – €5.665 billion, which is a reduction of €534 million to the EC's proposal – is largely insufficient.

An insufficient budget will be detrimental to the EU's global health leadership. It will undermine the EU's influence within multilateral agencies and will lead to unnecessary competition between EU's partners. An underfunded thematic pillar will also weaken the EU's ability to support civil society and human rights - both of which are being subjected to unprecedented attacks.

Additionally, the overall volume of the NDICI should clearly reflect the commitment of the EU to fulfil the UN target of 0.7% of GNI for development assistance. This is a fundamental condition for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development everywhere, which also means in the most disadvantaged countries and for the marginalized populations, as well as securing the EU's credibility in the field of multilateral cooperation.

In line with the EP's report on the NDICI, we therefore call on you to raise the share of the thematic pillar to 11,49% of the NDICI, and to reverse the cuts made to the EU's development assistance.

Sincerely,

1. Action against AIDS Germany
2. Aidsfonds (The Netherlands)
3. Aidspan (Kenya)
4. Asian Harm Reduction Network
5. Association d'Assistance au Développement (ASAD, Cameroon)
6. Centre for Environment, Human Rights & Development Forum (CEHRDF, Bangladesh)
7. CHOSING IS LIFE (CIL, Kenya)
8. Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung (DSW, Germany)
9. Friends of the Global Fight, US
10. Friends of the Global Fund Europe
11. Frontline AIDS (UK)
12. Good Health Community Programme (Kenya)
13. Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN)
14. Global Health Advocates (France)
15. KANCO (Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium)
16. Medical Mission Institute (Germany)
17. MISEREOR (Germany)
18. PHC Initiative Africa (Nigeria)
19. Salud por Derecho (Spain)
20. Sidaction, France
21. STOPAIDS (UK)
22. The LoveLife Project for Health & Environment Inc. (The Philipines)
23. Vote Youth Development Projects (Kenya)
24. Women, Law and Development Association, (MULEID, Mozambique)

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