

THIRTEENTH INVESTORS GROUP MEETING REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISION POINTS

- The Investors Group (IG) approved the Twelfth Investors Group Meeting Report after reviewing a table of follow-up action items that had been successfully addressed and completed.
- Country representatives, including Ministers of Health from Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda, and government officials from Cambodia, Indonesia, Niger, and Senegal shared their experiences and efforts to protect essential services and mitigate the impacts on women, children and adolescents as part of COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. They emphasized the importance of country leadership, alignment, and harmonization at the country level and investments in frontline and primary health care systems as critical drivers for building long-term resilience beyond the pandemic and GFF's crucial role and support. The GFF Secretariat presented updated analysis and findings of the impact of essential health services resulting from COVID-19 and the implications for partner countries.
- The Investors Group discussed the progress of the Alignment Working Group and formally endorsed the piloting of the proposed alignment framework in up to eight countries.
- The Investors group endorsed developing a [GFF nutrition roadmap](#) to be presented at the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Japan highlighting the key actions to further integrate nutrition into Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2025. Guest speakers included representatives from the Government of Japan and Scale Up Nutrition.
- The Investors Group reviewed progress on the strategy implementation and the results agenda and discussed the challenges COVID-19 continues to pose to countries. Coinciding with the meeting, [the GFF launched the 2020-2021 Annual Report](#), and [a new data portal](#) that brings together transparent, user-friendly data on women, children and adolescent health and nutrition, health systems, and financing in GFF partner countries.

COCHAIRS' OPENING

Cochairs the Honorable Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health for Ethiopia, and Joshua Tabah, Director General, Health and Nutrition Bureau for Global Affairs Canada, opened the meeting with Dr. Tadesse emphasizing the importance of the GFF partnership and the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health and nutrition (RNMCAH-N) agenda and the urgency for the Investors Group to double down on commitments to the partnership, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardizing progress. The cochaIRS emphasized the importance of gender equality and women's leadership as a key component to the success of the GFF. The meeting agenda and participant list are provided in the appendices at the end of this meeting report. These documents and additional presentations are available online at <https://www.globalfinancingfacility.org/thirteenth-investors-group-meeting>.

DAY 1

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Juan Pablo Uribe, Director of the GFF and Global Director of Health, Nutrition, and Population at the World Bank, shared reflections since joining the GFF and laid out the priorities moving forward, including ensuring an adequately trained and resourced health workforce, high quality primary health care and more resilient health systems. Emphasizing that COVID-19 has shown the importance of partnership, Mr. Uribe highlighted the importance of innovative collaboration and alignment through global partnerships, such as the Global Action Plan and the ACT-Accelerator. Monique Vledder, Head of GFF Secretariat, presented key milestones since the previous Investors Group including:

- Update on operationalizing the GFF Strategic Plan for 2021–25
- Launch of the Alignment Working Group
- Announcement that 12 COVID-19 Essential Health Service grants were awarded and there are six more in the pipeline to be approved at the TFC
- Upcoming launch of the 2021-2021 Annual Report and Data Portal
- Update on the Resource Mobilization Campaign which was launched in May with co-hosts, Government of Canada, Senegal, and the World Bank.

COVID-19: IMPACT ON ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES (GFF-1G13-2) *(For discussion)*

Minister Tadesse opened the session by sharing her experience as Health Minister from Ethiopia. The Honorable Minister Pierre Demba, Minister of Health from Cote d'Ivoire and the Honorable Minister Thiago, Minister of Health of Mozambique, shared their respective country's experience tackling challenges associated with the pandemic including challenges with the fiscal space and global supply disruptions and restrictions. Amos Mwale, Executive Director, Centre for Reproductive Health and Education in Zambia and Dr. Jessica Nsungwa, Commissioner of Reproductive and Child Health in Uganda shared their perspective on how COVID-19 impacted communities and how civil society has helped maintain a focus on the poor and most vulnerable people. GFF Secretariat presented findings of the GFF's monitoring of essential health services, focusing on how countries responded to vulnerabilities in their health systems, addressing service supply and demand issues with the partnership support. GFF secretariat highlighted ways the partnership is working with countries to address this disruption including through community-based services, investing in human resources and health care workers; advancing innovation and reducing financial barriers to services for the poorest populations

The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:

- Partners appreciated the GFF's utilization of phone and household surveys, noting that the disruptions data has helped inform decision making in many countries this data on disruptions
- Partners noted the synergy between maintaining health services and strengthening health systems more broadly and the importance that the GFF COVID-19 essential health grants and also emphasized the importance of integrating cross-cutting issues such climate change, SRHR, gender, and digital health to better understand health system vulnerabilities.
- Some partners expressed interest to dig deeper into the data and suggested that the GFF invest in a long-term effort and disseminate lessons learned among the health community to strengthen coordination and decision making.

- In light of the multiple monitoring exercise led by various agencies members of the IG, partners suggested harmonizing data collection efforts across institutions to avoid duplication and inconsistencies, to which the Secretariat agreed to propose options for alignment.

Decision: This session was for discussion

Action: IG members agreed to explore ways to mainstream data on essential health service disruptions with routine health data and strengthen coordination of data collection and analysis across the global health community.

ALIGNMENT WORKING GROUP (GFF-IG13-3) (For decision)

As part of the recommendations for implementing Strategic Direction One of the GFF strategy, the IG mandated the creation of an Alignment Working Group (AWG) led by partner countries. The AWG was tasked with developing an agenda at the country level and giving voice to partner countries in the discussion on how external and domestic finances can better align their support and technical assistance to country priorities and systems.

Cochair Joshua Tabah opened the session acknowledging the significant progress made by the AWG over the last six months and thanked health ministers from Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, and Rwanda, as well as members from development partner constituencies for their active participation in the initiative. Cochair Minister Tadesse chair of the AWG, provided an overview of the proposed *alignment framework* – which includes utilizing a *diagnostic exercise* to establish a baseline (and track the progress) of alignment in countries, together with a *Maturity Model* to determine the level alignment progress and develop improvement mechanisms as outline in *Working Together to Meet Country Needs: Recommendations from the Alignment Working Group*. Minister Tadesse shared the increase country demand with growing engagement in the Health Ministers Network¹ - from four country members to nine and as a critical space to discuss strategic issues related to alignment and experience sharing among countries.

Dr. Daniel Ngamje, Minister of Health for Rwanda, Dr. Pierre Somse, Minister of Health for the Central African Republic, and Professor Dr. Charlemagne Ouedraogo, Minister of Health for Burkina Faso, highlighted the importance of the alignment framework and the need to make progress across countries that are in various degrees of alignment. The World Bank shared its initial approach to implement the recommendations and institutionalize the alignment agenda within its own operations including incentivizing more inclusive dialogue and co-financing technical support programs; providing operational support and financial incentives to pool of resources at country level; and supporting joint implementation units to manage different donor financing streams.

The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:

- Partners recognized the key role of the GFF, welcomed the leadership of the health ministers in designing the AWG framework and stressed that maintaining this level of political commitment is critical for success of the piloting phase
- Partners welcomed the political economy analysis, particularly its emphasis on describing the issues that sometimes prevent adequate enabling environments for alignment.
- Partners welcomed the AWG’s focus on greater efficiency and effectiveness to drive results suggested refining the alignment theory of change to further articulate goals around equity and primary health care, and clarifying where Investment Cases sit within the *alignment framework*.

¹ Original members: Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. New member added in October 2021: Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

- Country partners stressed the importance of endorsement of the proposed framework and called for the commitment of development partners in its implementation
- Consensus was reached to not use a weighting/scoring system and find alternative ways to support decision-making . Other suggestions included making explicit links to established alignment efforts including seeking operationalization of some of the recommendations through the COVID-19 *Essential Health Service Grants*.
- It was also noted the importance of broadening the constituency to include young people and parliamentarians.

Action:

- GFF Secretariat will review the suggestions and incorporate the amendments into the recommendations document.
- Development partners agreed to onboard relevant country office staff regarding the pilot phase to ensure strong commitment to lay the groundwork for successful testing of the *alignment framework*.
- The AWG will work to increase its engagement with civil society and parliamentarians during the implementation phase.
- The AWG will create an implementation plan for each of the pilot countries for endorsement at the next principals meeting.

Decision: The Investors Group endorsed the piloting of the proposed *alignment framework* in up to eight countries starting in January 2022 with integration of the IG feedback into the next steps.

DAY 2

THE GFF INVESTMENT IN NUTRITION (*For decision*)

Chair Joshua Tabah opened the discussion by framing the importance of nutrition in achieving the GFF’s mandate and giving the floor to Mr. Taka Tsuda, World Bank Alternate Executive Director for Japan. Mr. Tsuda appreciated the GFF partnership’s role in integrating health and nutrition outcomes and noted Japan’s new commitment of US\$50 million in support of the GFF’s Resource Mobilization Campaign. Dr. Prak Sophonneary, Cambodian Minister of Health, shared how her country’s efforts in nutrition, supported by the GFF, World Bank, and other partners, had achieved solid progress in antenatal visits and early breastfeeding. Secretary General Alassane Mbengue from Senegal’s Ministry of Health recounted the lessons and challenges of his country’s 20-year fight against malnutrition, noting that positive results are achievable by using a multisectoral and people-centric approach but challenges remain, including scaling up, mobilizing resources, and reducing inequalities between regions. Ms. Umutoni Gatsinzi Nadine, Vice Mayor of Kigali in Charge of Socio-Economic Affairs, highlighted Rwanda’s efforts to reduce stunting, including the establishment of a dashboard and score cards to track child health, the embedding the GFF Investment Case in a national approach to achieve high-impact results and strong support from the Ministry of Finance.

GFF Director Juan Pablo Uribe opened the discussion among IG members, thanking the Government of Japan for its recent commitment to the GFF and for hosting the Nutrition for Growth Summit. The GFF Secretariat presented GFF investments and approach in nutrition to date and previewed the GFF’s Nutrition Roadmap to be launched at the N4G Summit looking at four main actions. Gerda Verburg, Coordinator for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement emphasized the importance a country-led model and multi-stakeholder approach, and highlighted growing awareness of the challenges to achieving nutrition targets because of climate change.

The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:

- Partners agreed on the importance of nutrition in global health efforts, many noting that the Nutrition for Growth Summit is a key moment to draw greater attention and commitment.
- Partners expressed strong support for the GFF's country-led, multisectoral and integrated approach to nutrition.
- Several partners emphasized the importance of nutrition in relation to adolescent girls' health, which has strong implications for birth weight, SRHR, and FP among others. The first 1000 days of a child's life was also cited as a key entry point for nutrition efforts.
- It was also noted by some partners that "over-nutrition," i.e., obesity, especially among adolescents, is a growing problem requiring attention.
- Partners stressed urgency on anemia, stunting, and wasting, all of which are highly preventable, especially through improved maternal nutrition.
- Partners suggested that the GFF should consider adapting the [OECD Nutrition Policy Marker](#) to better track how nutrition objectives are mainstreamed in development cooperation activities.

Decision: Endorsement of Nutrition Roadmap to be launched at Nutrition for Growth Summit

THE GFF APPROACH TO RESULTS (For guidance)

The GFF Secretariat presented the GFF's approach to results, highlighting the progress partner countries are making across the logic model, and shared key results coming out of the [GFF Annual Report](#) and new GFF [Data Portal](#). Key priorities for the GFF results agenda include mainstreaming the monitoring of Essential Health Services (mEHS); strengthening regular use of multiple source data by country platforms to improve policy, prioritization, and program improvement; supporting countries to strengthen the quality and analysis of data; and working closely with Results Advisory Group to advance collaboration across partners.

Minister Dr. Suprayoga Hadi, representing the Office of the Vice President in Indonesia, shared how Indonesia is strengthening its capacity for using data for decision-making. The Government established an integrated monitoring system that included dashboard, district convergence action plan, and village scorecards to track financial and outcome data at the subnational level as part of the stunting reduction program. He noted that strong political engagement at the village level and involving different ministries enabled the successful establishment and use of monitoring systems. Dr. Idrissa Alichina Kourgueni of the National Institute of Statistics in Niger highlighted how collaboration between institutions in Niger, and complementary types of data have strengthened Niger's National Strategy. For instance, Niger's National Institute of Statistics set up a quality committee in collaboration with MoH technical committees, the Systeme Statistique National (SSN), Countdown to 2030, the GFF, and other global partners to improve indicator quality reinforcing the capacity of Niger to analyze data for decision making to advance the health and nutrition of women, children, and adolescents.

Dr. Nkechi Olalere from the GFF Results Advisory Group shared findings and recommendations of the Results Advisory Group, highlighting three challenges and offering recommendations for each:

1. **Gender and equity:** Recommendations included strengthening the situational analysis of gender & equity as core to the GFF country engagement model; mainstreaming gender and equity across each step of IC development, implementation, and review cycle; reviewing, prioritizing, and facilitating the use of gender guidance; supporting design research; and collaborating to drive forward political commitments.
2. **Implementation research (IR) and evaluation:** Recommended that the GFF develop a forward-looking strategic approach to inform when, where, and how it will support the design, implementation, and use of IR and evaluation.

- 3. Rapid-cycle monitoring:** The Results Advisory Group recommended strengthening the health ministerial network as a pathway to enhancing governance; using the country leadership program as a key entry point to support timely and effective data; leveraging country platforms to strengthen demand for and review of timely data each quarter; and mainstreaming the monitoring of essential health services as part of the routine approach, including triangulating mEHS analysis with phone surveys.

Pauline Irungu, representing Civil Society, highlighted the importance of fostering an equal partnership at the design and implementation stages, and tapping into the potential that CSO and the private sector bring in innovations, noting that civil society can help build the relevant buy-in, ensure that governments use transparent data and work for all populations, and can assist to course-correct through Institutionalized joint reviews.

The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:

- Partners asked how the GFF is planning to support governments to institutionalize data for private sector service delivery in countries with mixed health systems as well as opportunity to track innovations in service delivery since COVID-19.
- Partners expressed the need to focus on how the data is communicated, including awareness of the time-intensive nature of data collection and how data is used at the district or facility levels.
- Partners asked how the GFF would support rapid-cycle monitoring in the context of needed capacity and asked how data disaggregation and private-sector data could be employed.
- Partners highlighted the importance of engagement with the private sector and invited the GFF to engage with the sub-working group on data for private sector engagement.

Decision: This session was for guidance; inputs from the group will further feed into the Results Advisory Group to strengthen the GFF results function, including its operationalization.

ANNEX 1: INVESTORS GROUP AGENDA

Investors Group Meeting Tuesday, November 16, 2021				
Time	Agenda Item	Objective	Action	Presenter
9.00-9.45am	Welcome, Opening, and Director's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval of IG12 Meeting Report - Approval of IG13 Agenda - GFF Director opening remarks - Secretariat update on key milestones and progress 	<u>For endorsement</u>	IG Co-chairs, GFF Director, and Head of GFF Secretariat
9.45-11.15am	COVID-19: Impact on Essential Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on the latest evidence showing the impact of Covid-19 on Essential Health Services - GFF partner countries will discuss the challenges in maintaining essential services and the strategies that are deployed in partnership with others to mitigate the impact. 	<u>For discussion</u>	Country representatives, partners, and GFF Secretariat
11.15-11.30am	Break			
11.30-1.00pm	Alignment Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss progress of the alignment working group since its inception including country level progress - Present draft recommendations for IG input and endorsement 	<u>For endorsement</u>	Alignment Working Group Members
1.00-1.15pm	Chair's Summary and Closure	Conclude day one of meeting.	<u>For discussion</u>	IG Co-Chairs

**Investors Group Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2021**

Time	Agenda Item	Objective	Action	Presenter
9.00-9.15am	Opening of Day Two	Summary of day one and overview of agenda for day two.	<u>For information</u>	IG Co-chairs
9.15-10.45am	The GFF Investment in Nutrition	Update the IG on the GFF's investments in and support for improved nutrition outcomes for women, children, and adolescents.	<u>For endorsement</u>	Country representatives, partners and GFF Secretariat
10.45-11.00am	Break			
11.00-12.30pm	The GFF Approach to Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Update on progress in operationalizing Strategic Direction 5: <i>Sustain a Relentless Focus on Results</i> – Share country-specific examples of progress in results measurement – Provide an update from the Results Advisory Group on work to date 	<u>For guidance</u>	Country representatives, partners and GFF Secretariat
12.30-1.00pm	Meeting Summary and Closure	Conclude meeting and discuss action items and next step.	<u>For discussion</u>	IG Co-chairs

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