

## ELEVENTH INVESTORS GROUP MEETING REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND DECISION POINTS

- The Investors Group (IG) approved the Tenth Investors Group (IG10) Meeting Report after reviewing a table of follow-up action items that had been successfully addressed and completed.
- The Investors Group strongly endorsed the Global Financing Facility (GFF) vision and strategic directions as outlined by the GFF [strategy refresh paper](#).
- The Investors Group endorsed a common framework to improve shared accountability for health financing and support countries in building stronger and more equitable health financing systems.
- The Investors Group endorsed the updated GFF-CSO and youth engagement framework as presented by the civil society organization (CSO) taskforce.
- The GFF director presented an update on the GFF response to COVID-19, key milestones of the partnership, and challenges ahead.
- GFF partner countries shared their insights and experiences regarding the GFF impact on the continuity of essential healthcare services during COVID-19.
- Partners discussed the proposal for operationalizing the GFF strategic directions and whether appropriate incentives are in place for the country model to succeed.

### CO-CHAIRS' OPENING AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The GFF Investors Group<sup>1</sup> held its eleventh meeting (IG11) virtually in October 2020. The Honorable Léonie Claudine Lougue Sorgho, Minister of Health for Burkina Faso, along with Josh Tabah, Director General for Global Affairs Canada, opened the meeting as the newly selected co-chairs. Both chairs spoke to their vision for their roles at this critical time for the GFF partnership and for the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health and nutrition (RNMCAH-N) agenda as well as the importance, opportunities and urgency for the Investors Group to double down on commitments to the partnership, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardizing progress. They emphasized the importance of gender equality and women's leadership as a key component to the success of the GFF. The co-chairs welcomed all partners, new members and special guests, reviewed the agenda for the day and addressed follow up items from the previous IG meeting. [The agenda \(GFF-IG11-1\)](#) for the meeting was approved. The follow-up action items and meeting agenda are provided in annexes at the end of this meeting report. These documents and additional presentations are available online at [www.globalfinancingfacility.org](http://www.globalfinancingfacility.org).

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<sup>1</sup> The GFF is a diverse, inclusive and results-oriented partnership encompassing a range of stakeholders and experts with varying perspectives. As such, the views expressed and language used in the report do not necessarily reflect those of some members of the partnership.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Muhammad Pate, Director of the GFF Secretariat, provided an update on the GFF partnership and key milestones achieved since the last IG meeting as well as challenges ahead. He shared findings from the recently released annual report, which demonstrated how, in its first five years, the GFF's country-led, collaborative approach is working to improve the health of women, children and adolescents in its partner countries and help close equity gaps. He explained the dangers of COVID-19 in reversing health gains and how women, children and adolescents in the poorest countries and most vulnerable communities stand to suffer the most from this protracted health crisis. The director then reiterated how after partners sounded the alarm of the impact on COVID-19 at the last IG meeting, the GFF swung into action early to support its 36 partner countries to protect, adapt and promote essential health services as they respond to the pandemic. He emphasized the GFF has a unique, complementary and critical role to play alongside the World Bank in the global COVID-19 response to maintain a laser focus on protecting essential health services for the most vulnerable population, and developing strategies to strengthen frontline community and primary care services and systems to enable the equitable, affordable and safe access and delivery of vaccines when they become available. Lastly, Muhammad shared his perspectives on the strategy refresh, as a preview to the discussion later in the meeting.

## STRATEGY REFRESH (GFF-IG11-2)

IG Co-chair Josh Tabah shared his positive impressions of the GFF strategy refresh as a core team member and explained this session's objective would be to endorse the GFF vision and strategic directions as outlined in the strategy refresh paper. As leaders of the process, Muhammad and several core team members provided their perspectives and reinforced their strong support for the outcome of the strategy. Muhammad also explained that during the strategy refresh public consultation the GFF Secretariat received more than 200 comments, many of which focused on the inclusion of equity, gender and voice of affected populations, CSOs, leadership, capacity building and the call to double down efforts.

### **The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:**

- Members strongly endorsed the strategy refresh outcome, including its inclusive consultative process and laser focus on RMNCAH-N and results, along with emphasis on the importance of next steps and recognizing potential implementation and operationalization challenges, with support for an independent midterm review.
- Members acknowledged the importance of country leadership and how maintaining this focus is key to ensuring sustainability, which includes ensuring the GFF builds on health financing as a comparative advantage with the World Bank and the ministers of finance, focusing on public financial management and service delivery systems, supporting the role of private sector and available resources in embracing innovation and on quality of services, given the competing priorities and COVID-19 impact.
- Members recognized the importance of ensuring coordination and alignment of donors and partners at country level, including suggestions for finding the right tools to ensure accountability among partners and with country governments, questions regarding the alignment and integration of procurement and supply chain, and questions on how investment cases will support systems to ensure sustainable commodity procurement strategies.
- Members identified the need to address remaining challenges in coordinating technical assistance, ensuring sustainable transitions, prioritizing all stakeholders around country priorities and investment cases, and the restrictions posed by different agency mandates and governance mechanisms. Several

speakers concluded the time has arrived to move from talking about collaboration and alignment behind country priorities to acting on them.

- Members appreciated the necessity for increased focus on engagement with civil society, equity and inclusion, building capacity of women leaders, advancing gender equality and focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Members also suggested these issues could be further integrated into primary health care under universal health care (UHC).

**Decision:** The Investors Group endorsed the GFF vision and strategic directions as outlined in the strategy refresh paper.

**Action items:**

- The GFF Secretariat will provide a report of the findings from the public consultation and survey.
- The Secretariat will officially launch the strategy following the IG meeting. (*Completed 10/26/20 and available [online](#)*).

### **PROTECTING ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS DURING COVID-19 (GFF-IG11-3)**

For the second session of the day, Petra Vergeer, Knowledge and Learning Lead for the Secretariat, presented an update on the GFF's pandemic-focused activities, including its impact on the continuity of essential healthcare services, stressing that the pandemic has forced partners to remain vigilant and work collaboratively to ensure protection of essential care and prevent backsliding on the progress for the health and wellbeing for women, children and adolescents. She also provided an overview of recent data showing how the pandemic has affected healthcare services in GFF partner countries. Minister Lougue shared how Burkina Faso is ensuring continuity of essential services, explaining the government-developed plan and sharing the country's experience participating in the GFF's Service Delivery Learning Program (SDLP). The minister noted the program's ability to identify areas of intervention accompanied by priority actions to be implemented at the community level represents its biggest value add. Country representatives from Haiti, Rwanda, and Uganda each spoke to their experiences with ensuring continuation of essential health services during COVID-19 and the ways in which the GFF has supported—and can continue to support—the efforts of the government. Luis Pinto, GFF's Knowledge and Learning Officer, explained the Secretariat is working in close collaboration with World Bank teams in all 36 countries, and through the learning platform, to provide technical assistance to meet the needs around the essential services agenda.

**The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:**

- A number of partners agreed the GFF should continue to support countries in their effort to protect the most vulnerable populations during COVID-19 and were pleased with the importance of partner alignment to strengthen the resilience of the health systems, bolster the protection of medical personnel to sustain care, and ensure equitable access to equipment and availability of drugs and vaccines.
- IG members discussed how the GFF provides a unique role and added value in terms of health outcomes including: a) supporting partner countries in pandemic responses such as national advocacy planning and coordination and health financing reforms; b) strengthening the frontline service delivery to help GFF countries adopt delivery models, protect health workers and secure essential health commodities; and c) complementing the financing provided by the World Bank with fast-track COVID-19 facility and offering technical assistance to partner countries.

- IG members emphasized the importance of data, alignment and innovative solutions, asking for more information at the subnational level and a deeper-dive analysis that focuses on bottlenecks to assess how domestic and partner resources can be used most effectively.

**Decision:** The session focused on discussion only; no decision taken.

## DAY 2

### OPERATIONALIZING THE GFF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS—WHAT WILL IT TAKE? (GFF-IG11-4)

Monique Vledder, Head of the GFF Secretariat, presented the proposal to operationalize the approach to country implementation and alignment, sharing accountability for the strategic directions outlined in the GFF strategy. She explained the importance and ability of the GFF to adapt to financing in the local context, adding that while the GFF model has evolved, its country-focused partnership model still emphasizes alignment with a need for accountability and transparency. She explained that while supporting stronger country voices at the global level is important, national leadership has a greater impact on the success of the GFF model. She stressed the importance of thinking about the complementarity of each partner, since the GFF country-led investment plan leverages partnership to build on complimentary. During the session, IG members were asked to comment on the following three questions on the plan for operationalizing the strategy:

- Does this vision resonate?
- Do we have the right incentives in place for this country model to succeed?
- Any suggestions?

**The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:**

- Members strongly agreed on the approach and vision for operationalizing the strategy refresh, including clear roles and responsibilities at the country level, and agreed on the need at the country level for a balance between partner visibility and alignment.
- Members agreed that partner country governments must endorse and inform strategy operationalization.
- Members discussed creating incentive structures for partner alignment to help implement the GFF process in country, as well as creating systems for governments that do not undermine country leadership.
- Members discussed the importance of innovative collaborations, leaning on local institutions to retrieve data from consumers and ways private sector can help reduce the digital divide.

**Decision:** The session focused on discussion only; no decision taken.

**Action:** GFF Secretariat will, based on proposals in presentation and feedback, develop a detailed plan for making the strategy operational.

### OPERATIONALIZING THE GFF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS—STRENGTHENING MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE HEALTH FINANCING AGENDA (GFF-IG11-5)

To continue the discussion on concrete ways to operationalize the strategy refresh, this session focused on progress implementation and initial results of the GFF's health financing agenda. Ellen Van de Poel, Health Financing Lead for the GFF Secretariat, provided an overview of GFF health financing portfolio, noting this approach is critical as countries confront growing fiscal pressures and competing budget priorities during the

COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Many IG partners share a results-monitoring agenda and the GFF provides an opportunity for an effective global partnership to streamline results monitoring and support implementation of reforms while also reducing transaction costs for governments. Following this, the Honorable Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health for Ethiopia provided insights from the country perspective on the power of partners coming together with government around health financing reform. Lastly, Joe Kutzin, Unit Lead Health Financing, World Health Organization, presented a proposal for better alignment of tools and instruments around a common agenda and what can be done better going forward. He also shared a model of how these could better come together at country level, partner roles and responsibilities for this agenda, and how countries can benefit. Following the presentation, IG partners including those from Gavi, Global Fund, World Bank, and civil society, provided concrete commitments for how each agency might contribute to move this agenda forward.

**The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:**

- Members discussed how, at country level, this subject is a complex political process around ambitious health financing reforms, and how partners need to collectively commit and align around these priority reforms, addressing the issue of alignment not only among similar global health initiatives, but also on the country level to effectively support governments.
- Members discussed the importance of creating synergy and leveraging partners' convening power around the table, and existing mechanisms to ensure effective alignment among partners—which could include reviewing common results frameworks and utilizing a theory of change approach to understand what each organization is contributing to the common goal.
- Several partners acknowledged that a) civil society has a special role to play in this joint agenda, and b) funding decisions by donors might need to be amended to address the overall financing priorities in the health sector.

**Decision:** The Investors Group endorsed the proposed collaborative approach for IG partner agencies to improve health financing data and reduce transaction costs for countries.

**Action items:** A concrete accountability framework will be presented for sign off at the next IG meeting, and will then become a regular topic for reporting back during future IG meetings.

## **UPDATED GFF-CSO AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2021–2025 (GFF-IG11-6)**

For the final session, Bruno Rivalan, Advocacy Lead for the GFF Secretariat, presented for IG endorsement an overview of the updated GFF-CSO and youth engagement framework for 2021–2025. Bruno explained that as part of the GFF strategy refresh process, a CSO taskforce comprising of IG partners convened to develop an updated GFF-CSO and youth engagement framework for 2021–2025, with the objective of further strengthening support to CSOs and youth organizations to engage effectively in the GFF partnership. He explained the updated framework aimed to build upon the 2017 GFF Civil Society, Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategy by specifically clarifying the role of the GFF Secretariat in supporting implementation of the strategy. In tandem with the overall GFF strategy refresh, the taskforce aimed to: clearly define the challenges faced by CSOs and youth engaging in the GFF; define solutions to address the challenges, including the scope and focus of GFF support to CSOs and youth, and recommendations for an improved governance, coordination and funding architecture; and develop a CSO and youth engagement framework that includes support for technical assistance and capacity building, participation in country platforms, and advocacy and accountability activities. The taskforce developed a series of concrete actions to improve CSO and youth engagement in the GFF and respond to the specific challenges identified at country and global levels. The updated GFF-CSO and youth engagement framework

outlines a comprehensive package of interventions to be taken together to strengthen and effectively leverage CSO and youth engagement to deliver on the GFF partnership goals. The main solutions indented by the taskforce include:

1. Strengthening CSO, youth, and women-led organization engagement in country platforms and investment case implementation through dedicated technical assistance, stronger dialogue and government incentives for engagement in the investment case implementation process
2. Leveraging GFF Secretariat staff and systems to support CSO, youth, and women-led organizations engagement across the GFF logic model
3. Enabling a stronger and independent civil society and youth-led movement for women's, children's and adolescent health across GFF countries through a single CSO host partner

CSO IG representatives Amos Mwale, Center for Reproductive Health and Education (Zambia), and Kosi Izundu, Pathfinder International (Nigeria), emphasized the importance of engaging with CSOs on the country level from the beginning of the investment case development process. They expressed the importance of including CSOs in the prioritization process, particularly important for the tracking of COVID-19 resources, and ensuring enhanced transparency and accountability from all parties. The Honorable Eugène Aka-Aouélé, Minister of Health for Cote d'Ivoire, shared his experience of working with civil society and the role they have played in the health financing agenda and COVID-19 response. Lastly, members from the CSO taskforce—including the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund, and the Government of Germany—provided their perspectives on the process.

#### **The Investors Group expressed the following feedback:**

- Members strongly endorsed the proposed updated framework with an emphasis on the importance of partner alignment, and gender equality.
- Members asked for clarity around how agencies supporting CSOs will come together beyond the workshops and ensure the approach simplifies as well as increases understanding of how success will be measured.
- Members questioned how the host organization will be selected, and requested the experience of having a single CSO host both at country and global levels be documented so that other global health initiatives can learn from it.

**Decision:** The Investors Group endorsed the updated GFF-CSO and youth engagement framework.

#### **Action items:**

- The Secretariat will present the funding request for the updated framework to the Trust Fund Committee for approval.
- The Secretariat will work with the CSO taskforce regarding the procurement approach for selection of the host organization as identified in the updated framework.
- Taskforce will meet twice a year, once the framework is in place, and will continue to explore with bilateral donors options for filling financing gaps.

## **CONCLUSION**

The co-chairs thanked the Investors Group for highly productive discussions and their continued dedication to GFF and its mission. The IG11 meeting follow-up actions are outlined in annex 1. [A statement including an overview of](#)

[the decision points](#) from the meeting will be published publicly on the GFF website along with all the [meeting materials including presentations and documents](#). *(Completed 10/26/20)*

**ANNEX 1: FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS ITEMS FOR IG11**

Topic	Action
Strategy Refresh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The GFF Secretariat will provide a report of the findings from the public consultation and survey.</li> <li>▪ The Secretariat will officially launch the strategy publicly online following the IG meeting.</li> </ul>
Operationalization of the Strategy Refresh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GFF Secretariat will, based on proposals in presentation and feedback, develop a detailed plan for operationalization of the strategy.</li> </ul>
Operationalizing the GFF Strategic Directions— Strengthening Mutual Accountability in the Health Financing Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A concrete accountability framework will be presented for sign off at the next IG meeting, and will then become a regular topic for reporting back on during future IG meetings.</li> </ul>
Updated GFF-CSO and Youth Engagement Framework 2021–2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Secretariat will present the funding request to the Trust Fund Committee for approval.</li> <li>▪ The Secretariat will work with the CSO taskforce regarding the procurement approach for selection of the host organization as identified in the updated framework.</li> <li>▪ Taskforce to meet twice a year once the framework is in place and will continue to explore with bilateral donors how to fill financing gaps.</li> </ul>



## ANNEX 2: ELEVENTH INVESTORS GROUP AGENDA

Investors Group Meeting October 20, 2020				
Time	Agenda Item	Objective	Action	Presenter
9:00–9:45 a.m.	<b>Welcome, Opening, and Director’s Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Chair handover</li> <li>– Approval of IG10 Meeting Report</li> <li>– Approval of IG11 Agenda</li> <li>– Report from GFF Director on key milestones and progress of the GFF partnership agenda, and update on action items</li> </ul>	<u>For endorsement</u>	IG Co-chairs and GFF Director
9:45–11:30 a.m.	<b>Strategy Refresh</b>	Discussion on strategy refresh paper, and agreement on next steps for finalization	<u>For endorsement</u>	GFF Director, country representatives, and partners
11:30–11:45 a.m.	<b>Break</b>			
11:45 a.m.–1:15 p.m.	<b>Protecting Essential Services for Women, Children and Adolescents during COVID-19</b>	Update on GFF’s role in protecting essential services, and GFF partner countries to share their experience and approach to protecting essential health services in COVID-19	<u>For discussion</u>	Country representatives, partners, and the Secretariat
1:15–1:30 p.m.	<b>Chair’s Summary and Closure</b>	Conclude day one of meeting	<u>For discussion</u>	IG Co-Chairs

Investors Group Meeting October 21, 2020				
Time	Agenda Item	Objective	Action	Presenter
9:00–9:15 a.m.	<b>Opening of Day Two</b>	Summary of day one and overview of agenda for day two	<u>For information</u>	IG Co-chairs
9:15–10:30 a.m.	<b>Operationalizing the GFF Strategic Directions— What Will It Take?</b>	Discussion on way forward for operationalizing the approach to country implementation, alignment, and shared accountability	<u>For discussion</u>	Country representatives, partners, and GFF Secretariat

10:30–10:45 a.m.	<b>Break</b>			
10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	<b>Operationalizing the GFF Strategic Directions— Strengthening Mutual Accountability in the Health Financing Agenda</b>	Discussion on the health financing results to date and reach agreement on the comparative advantage of partners and mutual accountability going forward	<u>For endorsement</u>	Country representatives, partners and GFF Secretariat
12:15–1:15 p.m.	<b>Updated Engagement Framework for Civil Society</b>	Discuss the process and initial outcomes of the CSO task force to update the GFF-CSO engagement framework and ask for endorsement on the proposed solutions	<u>For endorsement</u>	CSO task force partners
1:15–1:30 p.m.	<b>Meeting Summary and Closure</b>	Conclude meeting	<u>For discussion</u>	IG Co-chairs