

Public testimony of Chris Collins
President and CEO
Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Frankel, distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about one of the United States' most efficient and effective investments in foreign assistance: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Friends is requesting \$2 billion in funding for the program in fiscal year 2026, the first appropriations year of the Global Fund's 8th Replenishment.

Mr. Chairman, I want to start by thanking you for your consistent support of the Global Fund. Your fiscal year 2023 allocation for the Global Fund catalyzed increased commitments from other donors around the world that year and had the impact of saving many lives.

Established in 2002, the Global Fund is an international partnership that leverages contributions from governments, private companies and foundations to finance programs to prevent and respond to HIV, TB and malaria epidemics in low- and middle-income countries. These are three deadliest diseases in the world, and the Global Fund partnership has reduced the combined death rate by 64% and saved more than 65 million lives since 2002. In 2023 alone, the Global Fund supported 25 million people on life-saving antiretroviral therapy for HIV, treated 7.1 million people for TB and distributed 227 million mosquito nets to protect families from malaria.

The Global Fund is our way of ensuring that we share the burden for global health investments with other donors. The legislation that authorizes PEPFAR also limits U.S. contributions to 33% of the Global Fund's budget. As a result, every \$1 contributed by the U.S. has been matched by \$2 from other donors.

As I noted, U.S. leadership inspires other countries to give more. During the Global Fund's last replenishment in 2022, the U.S. pledged a 30% increase over its previous pledge, an increase that was matched by almost all major donor countries. And on the other hand, other donors know that if they do not make their own contributions, neither will the U.S. It's a model that firmly establishes American leadership while making sure that everyone pays their fair share.

The Global Fund doesn't only incentivize burden sharing among donor countries; it helps recipient countries take responsibility for their own health systems and transition away from donor assistance. The Global Fund's programs are designed to be sustained in the long term, even after donor assistance has ceased. It helps countries plan for a transition away from outside support, especially as a countries' disease burden and income level improve. And it requires countries to increase their own domestic financing over time.

These are not forever investments. We intend to win this fight and have partner countries take increasingly greater responsibility for their own health services.

To do so, the Global Fund makes every dollar go as far as possible. All of the Global Fund's programs are implemented by qualified partners—like national health ministries and faith-based humanitarian organizations—selected by national committees of public health experts, community leaders, government agencies and private sector leaders. The Global Fund has no staff on the ground, keeping operating expenses low—just 6.2% of its budget—and making sure that programs are designed and implemented by those who know a country's needs best.

At every level, the Global Fund scrupulously assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of its investments: a Board audit and finance committee, which the U.S. sits on; a technical review panel, to assess the proposals of those national committees; an independent Office of Inspector General; and local contract auditors attached to every single grant. That accountability is strengthened by the indispensable role of the U.S. in the Global Fund. The U.S. has a permanent seat on the Global Fund's board, provides crucial technical assistance, contributes to program design at the country level and coordinates implementation on the ground.

Perhaps the best way that it ensures good stewardship of taxpayer dollars is by adopting the ethos of the private sector, emphasizing value-for-money, return-on-investment and the power of innovation. The private sector plays a vital role in the Global Fund. In fact, private sector partners have a dedicated voting seat on the Global Fund Board. The Global Fund works with manufacturers to secure better prices on the health commodities it procures. For example, the Global Fund recently negotiated a 25% price reduction for the preferred first-line HIV treatment by pooling orders, negotiating price ceilings and enabling generic manufacturing. American companies are major suppliers of the Global Fund, which has invested \$3.5 billion in the U.S. economy since 2010. This is an organization that embraces the market and recognizes its potential to solve global problems.

Investment in the Global Fund offers value to the United States in another important way: protecting Americans and advancing our national security interests.

Disease outbreaks continue to pose an enormous and urgent threat to the United States. TB cases have recently surged in places like Kansas. In 2023, Florida recorded the first cases of malaria to be transmitted within the United States in twenty years. In addition, biological threats continue to proliferate globally, including recent outbreaks of Mpox, Marburg virus disease, Ebola and H5N1 avian influenza. The Global Fund is one of the world's biggest investors in the health surveillance and laboratory systems abroad that form the first line of defense against biological threats to America. A study published in the Lancet found that more than a third of the Global Fund's investments in HIV, TB and malaria programs also contribute to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

Health assistance is a potent expression of American power and leadership, allowing us to cultivate goodwill and influence in countries where we face acute competition from our strategic rivals. While China offers opaque infrastructure loans and Russia provides arms to despots, the U.S. leverages its distinct medical and innovation advantages as tools of soft power.

With clear and measurable results, health assistance—including through the Global Fund—is the U.S.'s most visible, enduring and effective form of diplomacy in many low-income countries.

The Global Fund is also uniquely positioned to save lives in the world's most challenging environments. Because of its model of local implementation, the Global Fund supports lifesaving programs in conflict zones where even American personnel cannot operate safely. It runs mobile clinics on the front lines of Ukraine, which has some of the highest burdens of HIV and TB outside of Africa. It is fighting malaria outbreaks in Sudanese IDP camps, screening for TB on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and treating survivors of sexual violence for HIV in Haiti. Where health systems are on the brink of collapse, it is the Global Fund which holds them together.

The Global Fund represents the best of foreign assistance: results driven, cost efficient, market oriented, locally implemented and with independent oversight. It makes America safer, more secure and more prosperous. For more than two decades, the Global Fund has proven itself to be a smart investment for the U.S.

This year, donor countries will make pledges towards the Global Fund's three-year replenishment cycle—and they will look to the United States as an example. For its 8th Replenishment, the Global Fund is seeking \$18 billion over three years; a \$2 billion support level in FY26 is consistent with the U.S. historically providing one-third of Global Fund resources. That investment alone would save an estimated 2.5 million lives and avert 44 million cases of HIV, TB and malaria. A contribution of \$2 billion in FY2026 could mobilize a further \$4 billion from other donors.

Congress—on a bipartisan basis—has always been the Global Fund's strongest supporter. The millions of lives it has saved are owed, in part, to that incredible legacy. I humbly ask you to please continue that legacy by appropriating \$2 billion for the Global Fund in FY2026. For Americans and people around the world, it can be an investment that with a lifechanging rate of return.