

## **Bill Gates Closing Remarks**

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### **Opening: Italy's Leadership in Global Health**

President Ricciardi (REE-CHEE-AR-DEE), Dr. Dybul, and distinguished guests – thank you for inviting me to speak about the Global Fund and the essential role it will play in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Standing here, in this historic building, I'm reminded of the incredibly important role Italy has played – and continues to play – in the fight to achieve health and equity for all.

This great institution has been home to three Nobel Prize winners:

- Daniel Bovet (BO-VAY) – A pioneering drug developer who did breakthrough research on anesthesia, antihistamines, sulfa drugs, and chemotherapy;

- Ernst Boris Chain – who played a critical role in the development of penicillin; and
- Rita Levi-Montalcini (LEH-VEE MON-TALL-CHI-NI) – who was a leader the field of neurobiology and an outspoken champion of human rights and women’s rights.

Together, their work has helped save millions of lives, and it has made the world a better place for people everywhere.

ISS has also played a leading role in the fight against HIV, TB, and malaria.

It’s easy to forget that malaria was endemic in Italy until the 1950s. A century ago, there were about 2 million malaria cases each year, causing up to 20,000 deaths.

But this institute worked in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation to pioneer breakthroughs in the surveillance, control, and elimination of malaria.

The lessons learned in Italy were applied elsewhere and helped accelerate the elimination of malaria around the world. Thanks in large part to the work of ISS, more than half of the world's nations are now malaria free.

The Institute has also played a leading role in the fight against AIDS. Research conducted here helped explain how HIV is transmitted from mothers to children, and it helped optimize combination drug therapy.

ISS has done incredible work translating research into impact, and so it's appropriate that we're here today to celebrate Italy's contribution to global health and the Global Fund's contribution to the SDGs.

### **Italy's Commitment to the Global Fund**

Italy has been a tremendous supporter of the Global Fund.

- The Global Fund was officially created in Genoa at the 2001 G8 Summit.

- Italy has been one of the Global Fund's largest donors, contributing more than 1 billion euros since its inception.
- About one-quarter of Italy's development assistance for health has gone to the Global Fund.
- In 2013, Italy renewed its commitment to the Global Fund despite tough economic times.
- And we're grateful to Italy for substantially increasing its pledge to the Global Fund in 2016.

### **The Business Case for the Global Fund**

Italy has long understood the value of the Global Fund. It delivers an incredible return on investment. In fact, it's hard to imagine another investment where the link between dollars contributed and lives saved is more compelling.

Every \$100 million invested in the Global Fund will save 60,000 lives. As someone who spent more than 30 years in business, I put a high priority on results, and that's an amazing return.

One of the reasons the Global Fund has been so successful is that it recognized from the beginning that in addition to helping developing countries fight the “big three” diseases, it would have to help countries strengthen their health systems.

This approach has not only enabled countries to make significant progress against HIV, TB, and malaria. It has also empowered countries to improve the delivery of primary health care, maternal and child health services, and preparedness for pandemics and other emerging health threats.

More than one-third of Global Fund investments go to help countries build more resilient and sustainable health systems.

## **Integrated Service Delivery**

For example, the Global Fund is working with UNICEF to ensure that when parents take their children to the clinic with a high fever, their children are evaluated for a variety of possible causes and given the appropriate treatment right away. This is especially important in poor countries where children with malaria and severe pneumonia often show similar symptoms.

Sending a mother home with the wrong drug to treat her child isn't just inefficient, it can have deadly results.

The Global Fund's integration of HIV and TB testing and treatment is another important step to better integrate and improve the cost-effectiveness of vital health services.

## **Surveillance**

The Global Fund also is working to improve disease surveillance, which is essential to getting the right interventions to the right people in the right places to save lives.

The persistence of malaria in southern Africa is an example of why this is so important. It is a region with large migrant and mobile populations, including field workers, miners, and traders. Many of these people are at greater risk of getting malaria because they lack access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

The Global Fund is funding the development of a surveillance system spanning eight countries to help the region track where malaria transmission is occurring and respond quickly with early diagnosis and treatment.

## **Data for Impact/PHCPI**

The Global Fund is also working with countries to improve data collection and make better use of the information to target resources where they are needed the most.

In Kenya, for example, the Global Fund is supporting efforts to expand the country's HIV prevention efforts for women and girls – and focusing funds in three communities that have been identified as high-prevalence “hot spots.”

## **Primary Health Care: the Foundation of Sustainable Development**

Partnerships like the Global Fund and advances in health R&D have helped us move toward the better world we all want.

To achieve health equity for people everywhere, we need to continue efforts to get rid of the diseases that are still killing children in poor countries. And we have



to ensure that every country has resilient and sustainable primary health care systems.

And, as we saw with the Ebola epidemic, countries that invest in the basics – like effective disease surveillance efforts linked to national immunization programs – effectively contained or prevented Ebola outbreaks.

Never has it been clearer that the health of someone in one part of the world has the potential to impact the health of people in another part of the world. The reality that infectious diseases can and do cross national borders is a reminder that we are all in this together.

### **Conclusion/Call to Action**

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to Prime Minister Renzi and his government for their leadership. I also want to thank the Italian people for their kindness and generosity in helping to reduce global health inequity.

Italy has done so much for the world. We need your continued leadership, your best minds, and your capacity for innovation to help create a world where every person has the opportunity to live a healthy and productive life.

Thank you.