

Minutes
of
Policy and Advocacy Advisory Council Meeting: 8

Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia

May 11, 2017

Participants:

Tamar Gabunia - CCM Vice-Chair
Irma Khonelidze – NCDC, Deputy Director General
Ketevan Stvilia – NCDC, PIU, HIV Program Manager
Lasha Abesadze – GenPUD
Dali Usharidze – NGO New Way
Tsitsi Surameli – Ministry of Corrections of Georgia
Natalia Zakareishvili – UNFPA, Program Analyst
Nino Lomtadze - NCTLD
Nana Nabakhtevili – LFA
Ketevan Chkhatarashvili – CIF, President
Irina Grdzeldze – CCM, Executive Secretary
Natia Khonelide – CCM, Administrative Assistant

Objectives:

To discuss the feedback to Georgian Transitional Plan comments on TSP and elaborate the comments of PAAC on proposed amendments and recommendations.

The meeting was opened by Ms. Tamar Gabunia, CCM Vice-Chair who greeted participants and announced that Ms. Nino Berdzuli, PAAC Chair, Deputy Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs will join the meeting later on. Ms Gabunia explained that the purpose of the PAAC meeting is to review the feedback and decide how to incorporate recommended amendments into the plan.

During the discussions the special focus was given to the following areas: *the structure and content of the TSP; External Environment (political environment –section 1.1 of the TSP, objectives 1.1.1. Create conducive legal environment for HIV national response, including timelines for the interventions under activities 1.1.1.1).* It was noted that the plan should define key milestones and serve as a roadmap to guide a country towards sustainability goals rather than accommodate technical/conceptual descriptions of all milestones. The rationale behind the

timeline of the activity 1.1.1.1 reflected in the TSP was discussed. The recommended amendments were discussed. The objective **1.1.2. Create enabling environment for CSO engagement in HIV & TB national response** and all activities under this objective were thoroughly discussed. While speaking on the mechanisms for CSOs engagement in HIV and TB response it was explicitly noted that the activities planned under this section have been elaborated based on the lengthy, open and transparent process with close involvement of the CSOs and thus the consolidated view is presented in the TSP. It was noted that the importance of close involvement of CSOs in the national response is not under the question and adequately addressed not only in TSP but in other strategic documents such as NSPs and in NFM grants. While discussing general comments (HIV section) on Financial Resources (section 2.1) the attendees expressed some frustration with regard to the figures on allocation of the funds for methadone procurement in the public budget (the years of 2017 and 2016). It was noted that the comments on this section needs will be more thorough studied, further clarifications from the Global Fund can be requested.

The attendees discussed the issue of the guarantees for financial allocations and it was mentioned that BDD, endorsed by the Government NSPs represent the sufficient guaranty that the country can offer. While speaking on the 4-year cycle it was noted that Georgia State Budget has one year period. Afterwards the attendees discussed the comments to the **activities 2.1.1.5. Allocate commensurate funding for prevention programs targeting KAPs including low threshold services; 2.1.1.6. Align state funds allocation to epidemiological priorities for each key population affected to ensure allocative efficiency; 2.1.1.8. Engage with relevant ministries (MoES, MoC, MoYS) and local governments, city mayors and municipalities to encourage their engagement in multi-sectoral HIV response** . It was noted that the CSOs are included in the list of the stakeholders under the activity of 2.1.1.5. for advocating purpose. It was clarified that the stakeholders are listed under the activities 2.1.1.8 as the sources of financing and that's why the CSOs are not included in the list. While discussing the comments on activity 2.1.1.6. it was noted that the very first introduction of the Optima findings recognizes the importance of sustaining investments in programs targeting PWUDs. The audience discussed the comments on the Human Resources (**section 2.2.1., activity 2.2.1.1. Develop policy for production and continuous professional development of human resources for HIV/AIDS programs, including CSO personnel**); The on-going processes were one more time reviewed. The leading role of the MoLHSA as well as importance of coordinating activities with the Ministry of Education and Science were underlined. The audience expressed some confusion with regard to the Global Fund comment on the activities **2.2.1.2. Integrate HIV training modules in the undergraduate and postgraduate education system) and 2.2.1.3. Provide training of trainers, including that for academia staff on HIV related topics** envisaging considerations for inclusion of the Ministry of Economics as a responsible body. It was noted that the clarifications from the Global Fund can be requested. The comment to the activity 2.4.1.3. **under the section of Governance -2.4 -**

Engage in dialogue with officials and key stakeholders to discuss recommended alternatives for positioning CCM adequately within the government hierarchy and implement most optimal option that will ensure sustainability of legally empowered CCM structure – was discussed and noted that it is anticipated that discussions on alternatives for the CCM transitioning will take place in 2017 and there will be an agreement on which option to implement in subsequent years. The comments to the section of *Procurement and Supply Chain Management – 2.7* require further considerations. The audience comprehensively reviewed General Points of Concern and Conclusions of the Global Fund document. The observation on an asymmetrical nature of the comments with great prevalence of the HIV issues in comparison with TB was stated.

Audience one more time focused on the structure of the document. It was stated that the structure and content of the TSP had been elaborated through a long consultative process of all stakeholders. Thus it was an intention that the TSP should high level activities in order to achieve sustainable TB and HIV responses. Versus NSP where specific activities aimed at model development, patient engagement mechanisms and financing are envisioned, TSP is more concerned with health systems strengthening to prepare the system for anticipated transition. Technical work should be organized during the transition period to extensively discuss the new models and mechanisms which can improve efficiency of the system. Taking into consideration the fact that TSP development is an area in which countries have limited or no experience and currently there are no guidelines for TSP development it might be helpful to have from the Global Fund the overall guidelines on TSP development clearly stating what TSPs should include or exclude. The audience expressed its gratitude towards the Global Fund for such attention given to the transitional period in general and for providing the comments to Georgia TSP in particular. It was one more time highlighted the lack of experience in this sphere, the importance of proper transitional planning for sustaining the remarkable progress done with help of the Global Fund and achieving more results.

It was agreed that the PAAC will continue working on its comments to the Global Fund feedback document on TSP in on-line format. Once agreed, the PAAC comments will be annexed to the minutes of the PAAC meeting and sent to the Global Fund.

The audience discussed the document about a small-scale focused study conducted in Georgia in the framework of Community, Rights & Gender Technical Assistance (CRG TA) Program supported by the Global Fund. The collection of feedback from civil society and community actors on TSP was initiated by EHRN. The study was aimed at understanding the opinion of civil

society on the content of this document and also to identify possible needs for technical support for meaningful engagement of communities in the process of its implementation and monitoring. Extensive (and maybe even unprecedented – as stated in the document) efforts undertaken in Georgia to engage representatives of KAPs in the development of Georgia's transition plan are recognized by the document. The audience also discussed the topic of receiving developed standards for sustainability of harm reduction services as per consultancy services endorsed by the EHRN and arranged through GHRN to address the issue of developing standards.

Decision of the meeting: the PAAC will continue working on its comments to the Global Fund feedback document on TSP in on-line format. Once finally agreed, the PAAC consolidated comments will be annexed to the minutes of the PAAC meeting and sent to the Global Fund.

Annex

PAAC comments on the Global Fund feedback to Georgia TSP

May, 2017

Minutes prepared by Natia Khonelidze

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