



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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January 14, 2020

INFORMATION MEMO FOR AMBASSADOR HUSHEK, South Sudan

FROM: S/GAC – Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, MD

SUBJECT: FY 2020 PEPFAR Planned Country Allocation and Strategic Direction

Dear Ambassador Hushek:

First, I wanted to personally thank you and the Deputy Chief of Mission for your dedication to PEPFAR and achieving the most possible with the taxpayer dollars. The ability to translate these dollars into effective and impactful programming has and continues to be core to our success. We understand the work that is needed to be done and remain cautiously optimistic about continued expansion. We have the additional COP19 \$15,000,000 dollars available currently at agencies (for increased ambition) and continued to provide sustained budget support. Even in a difficult operating environment we are hoping there can be an acceleration in impact. We are pleased you have made progress in:

- PEPFAR South Sudan has managed to continue implementing HIV programming even under difficult political and security circumstances; this is a commendable achievement
- To overcome specific operating challenges in South Sudan, PEPFAR South Sudan implemented several unique, low technology approaches to improve service delivery, share best practices, and monitor site level progress (for example, scale up of the ECHO platform to provide virtual technical assistance to health providers in facilities, and collecting monthly data using instant messaging platforms)
- Achievement of VMMC surpassed the target set in COP19, and largely within the appropriate age group

We did want to highlight both overarching issues we see across PEPFAR and a few specific to South Sudan. Full details will follow in a more comprehensive letter from your S/GAC Chair and PPM.

Throughout the PEPFAR family of supported countries and communities, five gaps are shared across the globe holding us collectively back from achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 related to controlling the HIV AIDS epidemic:

1. Continued new HIV infections in adolescents and young women
2. Supporting key populations with prevention and treatment services
3. Ensuring men are diagnosed and treated early [testing positive and new on treatment (linkage surrogate)]

4. Ensuring 15-35-year-old asymptomatic clients are maintained on treatment and virally suppressed (net new on treatment and treatment current growth, retention surrogate)
5. Ensuring all children are on the best treatment regimens and virally suppressed

We acknowledge that the PEPFAR team is experiences strategic constraints in your operating environment but we ask that you pay particularly attention to the above general issues PEPFAR is confronting as well as your unique issues in South Sudan, including:

- Overall retention in services (including programs for prevention, orphans and vulnerable children and treatment) remains a consistent challenge, resulting in limited overall growth and less-than-ideal quality of treatment and OVC programs
- Limited scale up of effective and efficient case-finding strategies continue to negatively affect the growth of the program, resulting in lack of identification of those in need
- Coordination among donors, such as Global Fund, in South Sudan's difficult operating and political environment, needs considerable improvement to actualize the efforts and gains of the HIV prevention and clinical program as a whole

PEPFAR targets for South Sudan are not PEPFAR's target but flow directly from the UNAIDS Fast Track Strategy of 2016. Since 2016, both the PEPFAR strategy and targets derive from the global communities of UNAIDS, WHO, and specifically Heads of State in their commitment to SDG 3 and are aligned to support the country's specific ambition towards those goals.

The global community in 2015 through their Heads of State committed to achieving SDG 3.3 by 2030 which for HIV is ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat. This was followed by a United Nations High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS in June 2016, whereby these Heads of State committed to the 90/90/90 Fast Track Strategy. Essential to the strategy was 73% community viral load suppression (VLS) by 2020 and 86% community VLS by 2030 combined with increased prevention interventions and zero stigma and discrimination to ensure all ages, genders and risk groups have access to life saving prevention and treatment services. Also, in 2016, 22 PEPFAR-supported high HIV burden countries committed to the three Frees of Start Free, Stay Free, AIDS Free with 2020 targets of a decrease in new infections in children to 20,000, 85% of pregnant women on ART, AGYW new infections to < 100,000, 90% of children on ART and 25 million VMMC's. Since 2016 PEPFAR and the GF resources have been focused on achieving these global goals that have been translated to each country by UNAIDS and subsequently supported financially and technically by the PEPFAR family. Since 2016, PEPFAR has utilized these global commitment targets as PEPFAR targets with the commensurate increased funding to countries in 2016, 2017, and 2018 to achieve the goals set out by the Heads of State. Many countries have made tremendous progress towards these targets and others need to accelerate. South Sudan is firmly in the UNAIDS category of needing to dramatically accelerate to achieve the SDG3 goal.

Our collective hope is that together we use this moment of reflection on progress and challenges along with the realization that the end of 2020 is only 11 months away to address these overarching challenges this year through COP 2019 implementation and use COP 2020 continue to fund the ambition the team committed to last year with the second year of acceleration funding. This funding was committed last year as part of a two-year acceleration and SGAC

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remains committed to the goals and targets we negotiated together last year during COP development.

The PEPFAR Country/Regional Operational Plan (COP/ROP 2020) budget is \$37,986,000, inclusive of all new funding accounts and applied pipeline and inclusive of \$15,000,000 in remaining FY 2019 funds.

In the next 48 hours, more detailed descriptions of OU's programmatic successes and challenges will be conveyed to your wider PEPFAR team by the S/GAC Chair and PPM in a phone call, after which the detailed planning level letter will be immediately released.

Again, thank you for your work and we are looking forward to working with you to achieve your Fast Track Strategy and ultimately the SDG 3 goal.

Together we can.

Deborah Birx

Subject to COP Development and Approval