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January 14, 2020

INFORMATION MEMO FOR AMBASSADOR Barlerin, Cameroon

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

SUBJECT: FY 2020 PEPFAR Planned Country Allocation and Strategic Direction

Dear Ambassador Barlerin:

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 continue to applaud the work you did collectively to define and refine the understanding of the epidemic in Cameroon and translating those findings into action to support the people of Cameroon.

Your PEPFAR team in country has embarked on a new trajectory in partnership with the Government of Cameroon (GoC) and the Cameroonian community to accelerate progress. This letter recognizes that you are early into the acceleration and is committing the second year of your acceleration funds. We remain committed to these joint goals in partnership with government and civil society. We are excited about realizing the dramatic increase in service delivery access through decreased out of pocket expenses and we look forward towards full implementation. In addition, we are really pleased with your progress in:

- User Fees elimination and preparation for the implementation of this policy change
- The scale up of viral load testing to improve viral load coverage among PLHIV
- Implementation of Test and Start as seen through consistently strong linkage numbers.

We did want to highlight both overarching issues we see across PEPFAR and a few specific to Cameroon. 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 just embarking on the new strategy for Cameroon but we ask that you may attention to the above as many countries share these issue and they may develop in Cameroon as you expand access to prevention and treatment services. Specific challenges remain in:

- Weak and ineffective supply chain and commodities procurement and distribution mechanisms from the national to the site level
- Underperformance on case finding and testing, including declining testing yields, weak index testing implementation and ineffective screening methods
- Inadequate policies and implementation of the minimum program requirements related to client-centered service delivery, including:
 - ART Optimization for both adult and pediatric regimens
 - Multi month dispensation and differentiated service delivery models
 - Host country response and co-financing

PEPFAR targets for Cameroon 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. Cameroon is in the UNAIDS category of needing to accelerate to achieve their SDG3.3 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

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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 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 \$92,070,911, inclusive of all new funding accounts and applied pipeline and inclusive of the second year of the acceleration funds of \$53,570,911.

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

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