

Secretary Thompson's statement on his election to the Chair of the Board

SECRETARY THOMPSON'S STATEMENT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA

Friends, colleagues, fellow Board members. I am sorry I am unable to be with you in Geneva today, but President Bush has asked me to be with him as he addresses his Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS in Washington. Both he and I want to express our deep appreciation for your electing me as Chair of the Board.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve with you as we got the Fund up and running, and I look forward to continuing our work as we bring the most precious gift of all, the gift of hope to those living with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

When I was first elected Governor of the State of Wisconsin in 1986, AIDS was still a mysterious disease. From the start I made sure that those suffering from AIDS received care with compassion, understanding, and the very best medical care. Today Wisconsin is regarded as a model state for providing care and treatment, and for effective prevention programs. It was my distinct privilege to help create that response and now more than ever I am convinced of that vital link between prevention, care and treatment in blunting the impact of this epidemic.

Sixteen years later, I find myself still fighting this terrible epidemic as the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, and as a proud member of the Board of the Global Fund.

As President George W. Bush made it clear in his address to the American people on Tuesday evening, the United States of America and its resources are committed to the fight against global AIDS. We are proud to partner with the Global Fund, with our allies, and with every man, woman and child on this planet as we seek to end this plague.

Last year, I traveled to Africa and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Afghanistan and I have witnessed first hand the ravages of these diseases. Two things are forever etched in my memory witnessing the devastation felt by individuals afflicted with the diseases the Global Fund was created to fight; and the shining, persistent hope of those who give comfort to those suffering.

I look forward to being actively engaged at Board meetings as we deliberate together and work together as responsible and accountable stewards of the generous resources that have been entrusted to us. We may not always agree, but I solemnly pledge that I will work to bridge those differences and strive for a sound consensus in the Fund's efforts.

Ours is an enormous task and the world has placed an incredible burden on our shoulders. We must realize that only by investing wisely the resources in scientifically sound projects and by demanding financial accountability, can we demonstrate to the world that they should continue and expand on their commitments to the Global Fund. With the results that

I am sure we will shortly be seeing, I am confident that we can successfully convince others to devote more resources the Global Fund.



The Global Fund

To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

I am thrilled to hear of the many accomplishments the Board has achieved in just the last two days; Agreeing to a Conflict of Interest Policy, adopting a budget and work-plan for the coming year, committing to further explore different compositions and structures for the CCMs, in order to give civil society more access, and – most importantly – approving the second round of proposals.

I especially want to thank Seiji Morimoto for his outstanding service as Chair during the past few days, and although he is not with you, I want to pay tribute to Dr. Chrispus Kiyonga for his service as the Chair for the past year.

And congratulations to Dr. Suwit, we have a lot of hard work ahead of us in the next year, and I could not ask for a more dedicated Vice-Chair to take on the job.

My fellow Board members, I promise my door will always be open to you and I will always be available to speak with you. I am pleased to announce to you today that I am going to open an office in Geneva. You all know Dr. William Steiger. He will be my point person here in Washington, if any of you ever need to get in touch with me just call him and I will get back to you within hours.

I look forward to serving as an advocate, champion and spokesman for the Global Fund — and I especially look forward to seeing more nations, companies and individuals become donors to the Fund

Thank you again for granting me the honor to serve as Chair of the Board of the Global Fund.