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CIFF announces a partnership with the Global Fund to catalyse a major increase in access to HIV self-testing

9 October 2019, Lyon: As part of its contribution to the MenStar Coalition, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) today announced an investment of USD 25 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, dedicated to scaling HIV self-testing. CIFF announced the contribution at the Global Fund Replenishment Summit hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron in Lyon. “CIFF is championing HIV self-testing and other methods to promote self-care as one of the most powerful ways for youth, women and men to take control of their sexual & reproductive health,” said Miles Kemplay, Executive Director for Adolescence at CIFF. “People deserve the choice to test when they want, where they want and how they want.”

The impact of self-testing may be greatest in sub-Saharan Africa, which has the largest number of people living with HIV who do not know their status. Paulyne Chemeli, a Nairobi pharmacist stated that distributing self-test kits is: “improving the uptake of HIV testing among individuals who require confidentiality or who do not trust healthcare workers. Thanks to HIV self-testing, we now have more male clients and we encourage them to take at least two self-testing kits, including one for their partner.”

The CIFF – Global Fund partnership is designed to increase funding for country programs that have ambitious HIV self-testing goals as well as put supportive policies in place for people to easily access self-tests. “We applaud CIFF’s investment as there is an urgent need to engage people who would not normally test in traditional settings. Self-testing is innovative and seeks to break the cycle of HIV transmission, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.” said Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund. “By accelerating access to HIV self-testing, we can get closer to controlling HIV as a public health threat. More people will know their status so that those with HIV can start treatment while those who are negative can access prevention services.”

This investment will contribute significantly to scaling up the pioneering progress of the Unitaid-funded Self Testing in Africa (STAR) Initiative and was supported through partnership with the World Health Organization which, in addition to developing normative and implementation guidance on HIV self-testing, produced country-specific investment cases to guide and optimize partner investments. Dr Ren Minghui, Assistant Director-General, WHO stated: “HIV self-testing
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is an innovative tool that enables people to take initiative, empowering them to find out their HIV status without delay. WHO commends our partners, CIFF and the Global Fund for making this major new investment today. This will help millions more people to access HIV self-testing through national programmes.”

CIFF is increasing its commitment to promoting self-testing under the MenStar Coalition, which was launched at the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam with the goal to place an additional one million men on treatment, protecting their health and that of their partners:

“It’s crucial that we reach young men in discreet ways to break the cycle of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. We launched the MenStar Coalition with the Duke of Sussex last year and one of our pioneer initiatives in collaboration with CIFF, Unitaid is a self-testing campaign in Kenya so more men can find out their status. We are proud to call CIFF a partner and today, I want to congratulate them on their increased contribution to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.”, Sir Elton John, musician and founder of Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Beyond its support to the Global Fund, CIFF continues to invest in lowering the cost of self-tests, testing alternative distribution channels and funding education and promotional activities in partnership with the Elton John AIDS Foundation and Unitaid. This contribution is CIFF’s latest milestone in its broader effort to increase young people’s access to healthcare services. To learn more, visit www.ciff.org

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Notes to editors:

CIFF
The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) is an independent philanthropic organisation, with offices in Addis Ababa, Beijing, London, Nairobi and New Delhi. Established in 2003, CIFF works with a wide range of partners seeking to transform the lives of children and adolescents in developing countries. Areas of work include maternal and child health, adolescent sexual health, nutrition, education, deworming, tackling child slavery and exploitation, and supporting smart ways to slow down and stop climate change.

MenStar Coalition
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The MenStar Coalition seeks to engage men in new and innovative ways to break the cycle of HIV transmission and ultimately end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

Founded by the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Unitaid, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF), the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Johnson & Johnson (J&J), and Gilead Sciences, the Coalition will expand the diagnosis and treatment of HIV infections in men, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

Multiple approaches will be deployed to reach MenStar’s goals: data analytics and human-centered design to better adapt services to men; nuanced demand creation; targeted marketing; innovations, such as HIV self-testing; supply-side solutions. The partnership will also ensure essential HIV commodities and services are available to meet increased consumer demand.

MenStar partners will share findings and progress including integration opportunities, and impact on women, to help optimise the best approaches.

The establishment of MenStar was announced on July 24 2018 by Sir Elton John and the Duke of Sussex at the 22nd International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam.