An open letter to Nordic Prime Ministers' meeting with president Obama on May 13th

Dear Lars Løkke Rasmussen

This year nearly 3 million people will die from AIDS-related illness, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. Millions more will become infected. In the last decade, over 40 million people have lost their lives and hundreds of millions more have seen their families, communities, and even countries struggle under the burden of these three diseases. This is a crisis for global health, but the last decade has shown us that when there is political resolve - with funding - lives are saved.

In the 13 years since it was founded, the Global Fund has supported countries in saving 17 million lives, 8.6 million people are currently receiving anti-retroviral therapy for HIV; 15 million people have been tested and treated for TB and 600 million insecticide-treated bed-nets have been distributed to combat malaria. Investments are targeted where they can have the greatest impact, for example, over 55% of programmes supported by the Global Fund benefit women and girls.

The new Global Fund strategy includes a focus on human rights, including sexual and reproductive health & rights and gender equality as key pillars – very much in line with and as a result of the Nordic and .7 delegation policy priorities.

When the Nordic prime ministers met President Obama in June 2013, the Global Fund was a priority on the agenda. Now, you meet the president again on May 13th and can confirm your commitment to fight HIV, TB and malaria by renewed support for Global Fund as the leading global funder for the fight against these three diseases.

We can end AIDS, TB and malaria by 2030 - a goal Heads of State agreed to in September when they endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – but only if we fully fund the fight against the diseases. If not, recent research has shown how rapidly developing drug-resistance could reverse decades of progress at the cost of millions of lives. By 2050, AIDS, TB and malaria could claim an additional 150 million lives, at a global economic cost of USD$33 trillion. If we do not invest now, we will pay later.

This year the Global Fund will be asking countries around the world for pledges. The Fund needs USD$13 billion for the 2017-2019 funding cycle that would contribute to save up to eight million lives and avert up to 300 million infections and new cases of HIV, TB and malaria. One-third of all resources will be invested in developing resilient and sustainable systems for health. **Your commitment to full replenishment of the Global Fund will be critical to achieving the goal of ending the pandemics.**

Further, the Global Fund is only a part of the overall puzzle. The effort to eliminate these diseases is a partnership including governments, Civil Society, the Private Sector and other stakeholders, all of whom must intensify their current efforts. The Global fund is of particular importance as it is supporting the efforts of civil society allowing for a rights based effort and reaching key populations. **We urge those countries with pandemics of HIV, TB and malaria to scale-up access to programmes and services across the treatment-prevention continuum, and further strengthen their response to the three diseases.**

Less than a year has passed since the SDGs were agreed with ambitious targets of ending AIDS, TB and malaria as pandemics by 2030. The upcoming replenishment is a test of our commitment to achieving the targets. Without greater resources devoted to tackling the

world's biggest infectious diseases, including through the investment in resilient systems for health, the SDGs will not be achieved, and the commitments made by world leaders will begin to look like empty promises in their very first year.

We call on you to increase investments in tackling HIV, TB and malaria and ensure we are on course to end the diseases by 2030.