
Fighting Health Pandemics and Governance Failures: A View From Geneva

AN INTERVIEW WITH KINGSLEY MOGHALU

Kingsley Moghalu joined the United Nations in 1992 and is currently a senior official at the World Health Organization. He also serves as the Head of Global Partnerships at The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) in Geneva, Switzerland. At the invitation of the UN Secretary-General, he served from January to July 2006 as a member of the high-level Redesign Panel on the United Nations Administration of Justice System, a key component of management reform undertaken by the UN. In 2005, Dr. Moghalu founded the Isaac Moghalu Foundation in Nigeria in memory of his deceased father, one of Nigeria's pioneer diplomats. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Philadelphia-based Opportunities Industrialization Centers International, Inc., an international non-profit organization founded in 1970 by the late American civil rights leader Reverend Leon Sullivan.

Dr. Moghalu is the author of two books, Global Justice and Rwanda's Genocide. He is currently working on a collection of essays about globalization and Africa's role in the international affairs. He received a Ph.D. in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, a Master of Arts from The Fletcher School in 1993, and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

On February 12, 2008, The Forum's staff editor Mackinnon Webster spoke with Dr. Moghalu about strategic initiatives launched by the Global Fund, reforms to the internal justice system at the UN, and the role of civil society and the private sector in social change in Africa.

FLETCHER FORUM: *In your current position, what is your vision for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in the next five years?*

KINGSLEY MOGHALU: My vision is that, over the next five years, the

Global Fund will continue making a measurable difference in reducing the burden of AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria in developing countries. It has already started making this impact. Right now there are about two million people in developing countries on anti-retroviral treatment as a result of programs financed by the Global Fund. That is two million people who may have died, if it were not for the financial resources that the Global Fund has mobilized and dispersed. I do not frankly see those diseases being wiped out in five years because this is a long-haul battle. But I hope that the Global Fund, which is one of several actors in the fight against these pandemics, will have made quite a lot of impact in the next five years. I think we are on track to do so.

FORUM: *What challenges do you see facing the Global Fund in making this impact?*

MOGHALU: It used to be that resources were the major challenge. Although we still lack the resources required to scale up programs according to the level of need and impact of these pandemics in developing countries, we must still acknowledge that unprecedented resources have been allocated to the Global Fund, which has mobilized \$21 billion in assets since its establishment in 2002 and which has an investment portfolio of \$11 billion in 136 countries.

The current challenge is ensuring that the demand from program-implementing countries matches the true need. The Global Fund responds to requests from countries for financing; it does not design any programs in Geneva. Programming is a country-led process; however, we know that there are many needs that are not articulated in the proposals we receive and that the impact of the pandemics in these countries is really much more than the requests being made of the Global Fund. So, I think it is very important that developing countries request adequate and appropriate resources. Requests are submitted through a competitive process, and that means not everyone who asks will receive funds because we have to make sure the system is performance-based. The proposals must be technically sound and show very clear potential to save lives. So far, approximately 40–50 percent of the proposals have been approved by the Global Fund's Technical Review Panel, which looks at these proposals each financing cycle. We would hope for a situation in which a much greater percentage of proposals are approved based on performance and technical merit.

The other challenge that still exists is the capacity of developing countries to use these funds effectively. There are a lot of problems with development aid and a lot of them are problems of governance. In some

countries the problem is capacity, including the lack of technical capacity, but in some places—in many places—governance issues further compound the problem of capacity.

FORUM: *How, if at all, is the Global Fund working with governments to identify their needs more clearly and to prepare proposals for submission?*

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MOGHALU: We are working with various countries to mobilize their demands more effectively, which is yet another important challenge facing the Global Fund in the next few years. In terms of approach, starting in 2009, the Global Fund will be moving from a project-based funding mode to financing national health strategies for HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. For example, in a country with a very weak health system, a strategy-based approach might entail strengthening the health care delivery system so that it is better equipped to manage care and treatment services for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria. Since many countries have weak health systems, many countries have developed strategies—financed by the Global Fund—to address these weaknesses.

FORUM: *The Global Fund is one of many players in this challenge. Who are these other players and what is their unique role in addressing the challenges that lie ahead?*

MOGHALU: The fight against global health pandemics is part of a wider effort of international development. These pandemics are not stand-alone issues; they affect the economic bottom line of these countries. There are many other players involved, although the Global Fund is one of the most important. Its role is to act as a financing mechanism. There are players such as the World Bank, the United Nations Joint Program on HIV and AIDS, the World Health Organization, bilateral donor aid, the private sector, and civil society. The Global Fund is a multi-sector approach that involves governments, civil society, and the private sector to address these challenges.

FORUM: *You, along with your Global Partnerships team at the Global Fund, recently developed and led the Debt2Health program, which trades national debt for approved health programs. What impact are you seeing from these arrangements?*

MOGHALU: Debt2Health, which I first started to manage in late 2004,

is actually part of a wider range of innovative financing options on which the Global Fund is working. Others included the International Finance Facility proposed by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown when he was the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Debt2Health is essentially a Global Fund–facilitated agreement between creditors and their debtors to forgo portions of sovereign debt and invest such resources in health. The Global Fund brokers these arrangements. When the creditor agrees to forgo those debts, the debtor country pays that forgone debt to a counterpart fund. Then, the creditor country cancels the debt. When the funding is paid to the counterpart, instead of just going back to creditor countries as debt, the Global Fund uses it to finance programs that actually save lives; that put people on treatment for AIDS, TB, or malaria; and that actually prevent these diseases. Through this innovative financing program, the Global Fund has been able to put sovereign debt to use in saving lives and fostering development.

The program is still in a pilot phase. There are four countries that are taking part in the pilot phase: Indonesia, Pakistan, Peru, and Kenya. The first deal was just announced a few months ago between Germany and Indonesia. In the deal, Germany forgave about 50 million of Indonesian debt with a discount of about 50 percent, and Indonesia paid about 25 million to the Global Fund. Though I no longer directly manage the program myself, it is a program that clearly shows a lot of promise. We are already talking to a number of creditors who can engage in potential Debt2Health swaps. We are looking to expand this model.

FORUM: *In a previous role, you were a member of the Redesign Panel on the United Nations Administration of Justice System. What were the greatest obstacles that you faced while working to increase accountability and effectiveness through UN reform?*

MOGHALU: I was appointed to the Redesign Panel by Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General, at the request of the General Assembly. Accountability was a serious obstacle in the internal management of the UN. The internal justice and compliance mechanisms were very weak and were not independent. The system was mainly based on peer review and could not stand alone, which was one major problem. The second problem is that the United Nations has a culture of risk aversion that inhibits accountability. Enforcing accountability means taking action—and that means taking risks.

The Redesign Panel recommended a total overhaul of the system. The 62nd General Assembly adopted what we recommended in Resolution 62/228 passed in December 2007. So the new UN internal justice system

will come into effect in January 2009. I think there is a lot of promise for UN reform. In the last 15 years, reform has been the buzzword at the UN. Some would say that they have heard more of
 it than they have seen. But it has created a new consciousness in how they operate. The most important impact of the Redesign Panel on the UN has been the shift from symbolism to action. The UN has become more results-oriented and will continue to be so.

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FORUM: *Would you elaborate on an area in which you have seen the UN become more results-based?*

MOGHALU: In field operations, there has been a lot of improvement. There have been efficiency gains in terms of the management structure of the organization. For example, there is a program to streamline activities in countries around the world so that you don't have duplication and waste. I see a movement towards progress, but there is still a long way to go.

More difficult is the democratization of organs such as the Security Council. But we have clearly seen an ongoing process whereby outdated mandates are being canceled. Some of these mandates tend to last forever, because there is always some interest in continuing the mandate. The organization has gotten to a point where it is looking beyond the vested interests of Member States to consider what is good for the whole and I think that is a good thing.

FORUM: *Have you felt that managers have been pushed to be less risk-averse in their decision making?*

MOGHALU: The work of the Redesign Panel will enforce a system of accountability. I think the new system we have designed, including an Office for the Administration of Justice, creates a system where people have to be more effectively monitored. That is a very clear shift. The UN is not like a private sector organization and probably never will be because, at the end of the day, it is an organization of states. So we have to make sure that expectations are within the bounds of that nature. It should run efficiently, it should be productive, and it should give value to the taxpayers around the world who fund it.

FORUM: *You wrote an article for The Forum (Vol. 26:2) on the International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda. In the last couple of years, there has been*

substantial debate surrounding the International Criminal Court (ICC). You seem to be an advocate for nationally and regionally based tribunals. Where do you see the role of these mechanisms and how they can play out in the international system?

MOGHALU: I see the ICC as a last resort for states that have accepted its jurisdiction, and as you know, it is a treaty-based court. I profoundly disagree

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with those who say that the ICC should be the court of first resort; I think that national or regional courts should be the first resort. The ICC is useful in the fight against impunity, but it should not automatically take over the judicial functions of sovereign states. That is why the states that created it made its jurisdiction complementary to those of national courts. The jurisdiction of the

ICC can only supersede the role of national courts in very strictly defined circumstances.

The ICC can play a very key role in situations where national courts cannot bring war criminals to justice. The national courts could be weak in the first place or there could be deliberate efforts to obstruct justice, perhaps by governments or by other parties. In such situations, the judicial structure at the national level cannot be relied upon to render justice that is dispassionate. For that, it is necessary to go to the ICC.

It is a bit of a fine distinction. I'm not dismissing the ICC at all, but the fact is that it is a treaty-based court created by sovereign states, and I don't think its jurisdiction should bind countries that are not signatories.

FORUM: *You recently started the Isaac Moghalu Memorial Foundation in honor of your father. What legacy did your father leave with you and with Nigeria? What was your motivation for starting the foundation?*

MOGHALU: I was motivated by a number of things. At a very basic level, the foundation was set up in memory of my father who was a distinguished civil servant and Nigerian foreign service officer in several foreign countries, including the United States. He left a legacy of public service that is very renowned in the communities that I come from in Nigeria. He was a man who had a very good name. My family and I wanted to remember him and immortalize his name. I did not do this alone; I did this in consultation with the rest of the family. So, that's the first motivating factor.

The second factor is the high number of children from vulnerable, underprivileged backgrounds in the rural communities in Nigeria. I wanted to the extent of my ability—I mean, I am not Bill Gates but an international civil servant—to give them a vision and support as many as we could with education. In the localities that I come from, kids were dropping out of school not just because they were poor but because they just wanted to get rich quick and they didn't think that education was worth their while. So, we inaugurated this foundation in December 2005. The ceremony was very, very touching. We had a lot of very highly regarded people, including a former Nigerian president, who presided over it. I think a lot of young people were very impressed to see that there is another path. They increasingly see me, and others, as a sort of role model that they can emulate, and they realize that if you become educated, you can end up working for the United Nations, which is not a bad dream.

We're trying to promote literacy and to give young people a vision for the future so they know that education is the way and that human capacity development is absolutely the way to progress. The foundation has a number of programs, one of which is the Isaac Moghalu Memorial Scholars Program, through which we've given scholarships to several young people now. We hope to do more in the future, because the more capitalized foundations are, the more they can help people. So, if we are able to obtain resources, we will be able to put a lot more young people into school. The foundation has a book club to promote literacy. It also has a lecture program, the Leadership and Citizenship Development Program, through which the foundation will have several seminars and lectures. The keynote address at the first Isaac Moghalu Foundation Leadership Lecture and Symposium will be given by the Ambassador of the United States to Nigeria Robin Sanders in April 2008.

FORUM: *It has been just over a year since the foundation was established, but have you seen any particular changes in students and young people since then?*

MOGHALU: When I returned to my hometown in the eastern part of Nigeria in December 2006, I remember that a lot of people came to me to say, "We have never—and we will never—forget the inauguration of that foundation. It really touched us so much. Your message touched us so much." A lot of people have told me that many young people have now changed what they've set their sights on and are going along the lines of what the foundation is promoting. Social change, education, literacy, and ethical values—these are all values that the foundation has promoted, and a lot more people are embracing them now in our communities.

FORUM: *Through your work with the foundation and with the UN, it is clear that you believe that social change and better governance will result from multiple projects coming together in the right way. What role do you see for these different sectors: the private sector, the smaller community-based organizations, and the UN?*

MOGHALU: I see each one of the sectors playing an important role. The time has passed when it was thought that the government alone would have all the solutions. Certainly, in developing countries, it's becoming clear that the private sector has a role and, indeed, many people feel now that the private sector will play a very strong role in turning Africa around—and it's

..... already doing that. For example, across the continent, the economies of African countries have grown an average of 7 percent per year for the past few years. So a continent that was once synonymous with poverty and humanitarian disaster is now seen as the last frontier of the world's emerging markets. That's because Africa has taken its place on the world stage through entrepreneurship, and people are beginning to see the opportunities on the continent. I think that the private sector has a huge role to play in creating wealth, which

..... hopefully will be distributed. It might not be spread out equally, but it will still attack the root causes of poverty because it creates opportunity.

Of course, the government provides the network, the overall policy framework, security, law, and order. Nobody else can provide those things except for the government. The NGOs play a very important role because they act as watchdogs over the other actors. They also bring a lot of services to rural communities, which the government may not be able to reach sometimes or where the private sector may not go for lack of viability. Each sector has its own value added, and I believe that development is best accomplished by finding the right role for all sectors.

FORUM: *To what extent do you think that when civil society fills these gaps, it lets the government off the hook?*

MOGHALU: Civil society exists everywhere in the world now. That's why it has the name civil society—it's a group of citizens coming together to work for social progress. There are limits to what civil society organizations

can do. Especially in big countries, the role of civil society becomes much more diffused and more local, and that has implications for impact. I don't think civil society actors are letting governments off the hook—I think they're adding value. Any government that behaves in a way that enables civil society organizations to let it off the hook is not acting responsibly.

FORUM: *Thank you for speaking with* The Forum. ■



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