

NATIONAL RECORD

By BRIAN NGUGI

KENYA is set to receive a grant of over Shs10 billion from the Global Fund on HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Public Health and Sanitation Minister Beth Mugo announced yesterday.

In what is expected to be received as a positive development, the minister in a statement said the Global Fund will send officials this week to Nairobi for the signing of a new grant worth over Shs 10.3 billion on "Improvement of the Quality of Life of People Living with HIV and Aids and Reduction of HIV Infection".

The funds are meant to scale up antiretroviral treatment and ensure that people already on treatment continue to receive their medical care uninterrupted. The minister said that the new grant, which is part of Round seven of the grants by the Geneva-based Global Fund, is the first phase of a new five-year HIV/Aids financing to Kenya.

Kenya to get Shs 10b from the Global Fund

And in an apparent move to improve accountability in the use of the funds and curb the possibility of their misappropriation, Mugo said that the new grant has new features, which means that the Government will no longer be responsible for accounting for activities implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"Care International in Kenya will be the Principal Recipient for non-governmental organisations. The Ministry of Finance will be the Principal Recipient for the Government Institutions," Mugo said.



Mugo

She added that part of the proceeds of the new grant will be used to strengthen institutional

capacity to effectively implement and monitor HIV/Aids services thus addressing the challenges facing Kenya in monitoring and evaluation of the Global Fund supported programmes, in the country. Lack of institutional capacity had earlier been cited as a factor that hampered the monitoring and evaluation of the use of the funds.

The minister reiterated that the Global Fund did not reject Kenya's Round 8 proposal as widely reported in a section of the media. "The Board of the Global Fund is meeting this week to decide on the fate of the proposal

along with others. What I know is that the Board of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria may request for some review of the proposal and its re-submission before January 21st, 2009 for further consideration for funding," she said.

She promised to disclose further details of the grant after its signing tomorrow. The report of the grant by the Global Fund comes in the wake of widespread fears that Kenya would lose out on the Global Fund's next phase of grants, due to alleged misappropriation of monies given to the country. A

task force was formed to look into reports that some of the money given by the Fund had been misappropriated.

The minister is expected to meet with the Executive Director of the Global Fund in Geneva after which Kenya will know its fate regarding the Round eight applications for the funds.

Meanwhile, the launch of a nationwide HIV testing and counselling campaign, took place yesterday with the Minister for Public Health and Sanitation, Beth Mugo, disclosing that only an estimated 35 percent of Kenyans know their status with the majority of these being women.

Speaking yesterday at Mathare North Health Centre when she officially kicked-off the campaign, the Minister said the health facility component of the HIV testing campaign for this year, aims to have at least 80 percent of Kenyans know their status by December 1, the World Aids day.