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November 22, 2013

Michael Weinstein  
President  
323-860-5200

Honorable Ahn Ho-young  
Ambassador, Republic of Korea  
2450 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

RE: Republic of Korea Contribution to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis,  
and Malaria

Dear Ambassador Ahn:

I write you on behalf of AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), an international nonprofit organization that provides HIV/AIDS medical care to over 250,000 people in over 25 countries.

As an organization which provides care in many of the countries hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic, AHF is keenly interested in the success of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to raise the necessary funds to fight these diseases. Like much of civil society, AHF views donor contributions to the Fund not as charity, but as a responsibility, both morally and practically, that wealthier nations have to protect the public health of the entire globe.

That is why AHF was disappointed to hear the recent news that the Republic of Korea has committed only US \$16 million to the Fund over the next five years. AHF was further dismayed to learn that the Korea intends to raise the majority of this money not through its own resources, but by taxing people flying into and out of Korea, including all foreigners who travel this way.

First, Korea, a member of the G20, is one of the world's largest economies, with an annual GDP of some US \$1.12 trillion. Clearly, Korea's Global Fund commitment is in no way proportionate to its economic size. For sake of comparison, the United States' GDP is roughly 15 times large than Korea's. However, the US contributes over US \$1.3 *billion* to the Fund every year. A proportionate contribution by Korea would be in excess of at least \$70 million per year, much more than the current US \$16 million over five years.

Further, Korea's preferred method of raising much of this money – by taxing travel by foreigners – indicates that Korea does not fully consider the responsibility for global public health to be its own. Given the realities of today's travel, it is obvious that diseases do not respect borders, and underfunding global health not only hurts those in immediate need, but further sets the stage for outbreaks where there previously were none.

We ask and sincerely hope that Korea will reconsider its commitment to the Global Fund, and will commit resources to the Fund in an amount keeping with its stature and responsibility in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Weinstein', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. Below the signature, there is a small handwritten mark that looks like '172'.

Michael Weinstein  
President  
AIDS Healthcare Foundation