

Response from the International Finance Corporation October 5, 2021

With public resources strained in many countries in Africa, the private sector has an important role to play in meeting the needs of more people. IFC's role in the healthcare sector is to complement government efforts to address infrastructure gaps by supporting private sector participation to help meet the growing demand for quality healthcare. This includes supporting healthcare providers to improve the quality and affordability of care as well as expanding their reach to underserved markets.

It includes helping partners to leverage innovative technology to improve both access to and quality of healthcare. Amid COVID-19, IFC is also increasing its work to expand access to vaccines and critical medical equipment for small healthcare businesses. IFC additionally plays an advisory role to create an enabling environment that opens the market to more quality healthcare providers. Dialogue between the private and public sector is necessary to support an effective private healthcare sector and one that complements the work of public services.

IFC is committed to deploying its investment and advisory activities to support healthcare providers that serve the bottom of the pyramid. An example is IFC's recent \$2.5 million investment in Ghana to support the expansion of New Crystal, a private healthcare group which provides quality medical services to lower-middle-income and low-income patients and families in and around Accra, to help upgrade its existing network of six clinics, add new facilities. It remains also important to continue supporting other private health providers that complement government differently such as offering specialties not readily available in public health facilities.

In Kenya, IFC has committed over US\$50 million to private healthcare companies since 2010. IFC assesses investment and advisory projects based on the project's potential to support country healthcare needs.

Quality issues: IFC is working to improve access to healthcare as well as healthcare quality and safety standards. IFC's Improving Quality (IQ) Healthcare Tool helps health providers improve patient safety, align practices with global quality standards, and build safe health infrastructure. The diagnostic tool operates at the network-wide and single-facility level, identifies quality gaps and cost-efficient solutions. To date, the IQ-Healthcare Tool has been used with more than 50 hospitals and clinics in nearly 20 countries.

Healthcare Ethics & E&S Standards: Ethical and responsible conduct in healthcare is necessary for the achievement of global health goals. In 2019, IFC led the global introduction of the Ethical Principles in Health Care (EPIHC) to help build transparent, resilient health systems through a set of shared principles that promote ethical decision making and behavior. To date, EPIHC has almost 200 signatures representing at least 4,000 facilities world-wide. IFC also has strict Environmental and Social standards that are globally applied and followed by our clients.

IFC Performance Standards: IFC takes seriously environmental and social concerns relating to the IFC Performance Standards in our projects and is committed to proactive and responsive engagement on complaints raised with IFC. An internal Stakeholder Grievance Response function has been established to support and advise IFC project teams and management in responding to E&S complaints from external stakeholders. This includes complaint tracking, guidance, and capacity building to facilitate

early action and proactive problem solving by teams and clients, and to integrate lessons back into practice.

People affected by adverse environmental and social impacts of IFC projects may also raise concerns with the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO), IFC's independent accountability mechanism. CAO addresses eligible complaints via two functions. Through its dispute resolution function, CAO helps resolve issues between affected people and IFC project operators using a neutral, collaborative problem-solving approach. CAO's compliance function carries out reviews of IFC's compliance with environmental and social policies, assesses related harm, and recommends remedial actions where appropriate.