

GLOBAL HEALTH AND MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Multilateral organizations, and the United Nations (UN) in particular, are integral in coordinating and mobilizing worldwide support to achieve global health goals. It is only with the unique reach and influence of agencies like the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Programme (WFP), and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) that the United States can successfully deliver on its commitments to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, in turn, meet overall U.S. strategic health objectives.

By aligning with the SDGs, especially Goal 3 (SDG 3), the U.S. has committed to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being at all ages. This includes ending preventable child deaths; eliminating AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases; and achieving universal health coverage by 2030.

The UN and its agencies are integral to achieving U.S. development and foreign policy goals, including the SDGs. For example:

- UNICEF-procured vaccines reach 45% of the world’s children, saving the lives of an estimated 2.5 million children each year.
- Following the liberation of Mosul, Iraq, health services were restored by WHO, and a 50-bed, state-of-the-art field hospital was handed off to local authorities after nearly eight months of providing lifesaving medical care to internally displaced persons and host communities.
- 2017 WFP programs to prevent and treat malnutrition reached a total of 15.8 million children who were under age 5 and women who were pregnant or breastfeeding.
- UNFPA-provided contraceptives have reached approximately 25 million people, averting an estimated 14,600 maternal deaths, 2.1 million unsafe abortions, and 7.5 million unintended pregnancies.

U.S. contributions to multilateral organizations leverage the support of other countries. Every dollar the U.S. contributes to global health is multiplied by other agency donors, making this form of support a “best buy” for U.S. taxpayers.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

Support full funding for health-related UN programming — including WHO, UNICEF, WFP, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and UNFPA efforts — in addition to the work of other multilateral partners, such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the World Bank; and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). Encourage the U.S. to pay its fair share, without delay, to ensure these organizations have adequate funding to deliver on their objectives.

Increase the flexibility and predictability of U.S. contributions to UN global health initiatives. Additionally, encourage relevant U.S. agencies to simplify funding streams and reduce the level of reporting requirements. When organizations like WHO or WFP are tied up in highly earmarked grants, it hampers their ability to rapidly respond in the face of increasingly complex health challenges.

Oppose efforts to defund or in any way undermine the work of multilateral organizations, including the misrepresentation of appropriations riders. Any determinations made by the administration regarding these riders or other policies should be carefully reviewed as part of a fact-based and transparent process.

Ensure high-level representation at global forums, such as the World Health Assembly and UN General Assembly, particularly when health-related matters are addressed. Demonstrate the U.S. government commitment to achieving SDG 3, as well as to investing in multilateral organizations and working collaboratively with partners to advance global health goals. Advocate for evidence-based recommendations, recognized experts, and known best practices.



Credit: PAI/Sala Lewis

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WHY THIS INVESTMENT IS IMPORTANT

U.S. support for strong, effective, and fully funded multilateral organizations is necessary to meet U.S. objectives for global health. U.S. investments also sustain the vital work of these organizations, bolstering their efforts to eradicate disease, save millions of lives each year, and advance U.S. global health priorities in return.

Multilateral organizations help protect American lives and interests by doing the following:

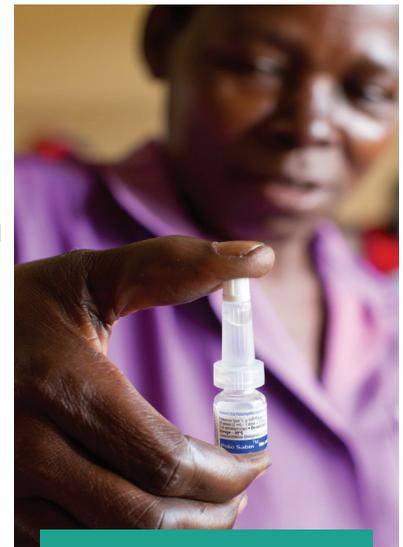
- Coordinating the global response to disease outbreaks and other health emergencies;
- Providing AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria prevention, treatment, and care services;
- Working to ensure that all children around the world have equitable access to vaccines;
- Improving maternal health outcomes and access to contraceptives for women;
- Catalyzing investments from other countries and partners to support programs that improve the health of women, children, and adolescents;
- Facilitating the success of U.S. bilateral programs and amplifying the effects of U.S. investments in global health; and
- Collaborating with U.S. agencies that safeguard the health and security of Americans at home and abroad.

Multilateral agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA are uniquely positioned with the international credibility, convening power, and organizational mechanisms necessary to facilitate and coordinate health work on a global scale. U.S. agencies rely on the extensive networks of these agencies, including frontline health workforces, to access remote or unstable areas, quickly respond to health crises, and advance U.S. strategic health initiatives worldwide.

The United States relies on the convening power of the UN to provide a platform for multilateral health collaboration, which leverages the commitment and financial support of other countries toward shared health threats.

U.S. support for UN health agencies also helps the U.S. collaborate with world partners on key health initiatives, enhancing America's influence and ability to steer the international health agenda.

These investments contribute to improved overall health and well-being: estimates indicate that, over the next five years, the new WHO General Programme of Work will save a total of 30 million lives, enabling more than 100 million healthy years of life, collectively, and sparking 2%-4% GDP growth in low- and middle-income countries.



*Credit: United Nations
Foundation/Allison Shelley*

RESOURCES

Investing for a healthier world: Changing the way WHO is financed <https://bit.ly/2x6GOrT>
Sustainable Development Goals <https://bit.ly/1lqICxS>

CONTRIBUTORS

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CITATIONS

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2. "Nutrition," World Food Programme. <http://bit.ly/2QXb28x>.
3. "Just the Numbers: The Impact of U.S. International Family Planning Assistance, 2018," Guttmacher Institute. <http://bit.ly/2OY1gBS>.