



WHO Funding and Advisories

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Why in News

The President of the United States has threatened to freeze US funding to the **World Health Organization (WHO)** for not taking necessary steps to combat Covid-19.

Key Points

- The President of the United States has raised allegations that the WHO has **praised China for its transparency** on the virus even though there has been reason to believe that more people died of Covid19 than the country's official tally.
- The United States is currently the **WHO's biggest contributor, making up 14.67% of total funding by providing \$553.1 million.**
- **The World Health Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations** responsible for international public health. It was founded in 1948 and is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.
- **There are four kinds of contributions** that make up funding for the WHO.
 - **Assessed contributions:** These are the dues countries pay in order to be a member of the Organization. The amount each Member State must pay is calculated relative to the country's wealth and population.
 - **Specified voluntary contributions:** They come from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners.
 - **Core voluntary contributions:** They allow less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources and ease implementation bottlenecks that arise when immediate financing is lacking.
 - **Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) contributions:** They were started in 2011 to improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential, and to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies.

- In recent years, assessed contributions to the WHO have declined, and now account for less than one-fourth of its funding. These funds are important for the WHO, because they provide a level of predictability and minimise dependence on a narrow donor base.

India and the WHO

- WHO has been working closely with the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and various state governments** on preparedness and response measures for Covid-19, including
 - Surveillance and contact tracing.
 - Laboratory and research protocols.
 - Risk communications.
 - Hospital preparedness.
 - Training on infection prevention
 - Control and cluster containment plan.
- However, on March 26, 2020 addressing the **virtual G-20 summit to deal with Covid-19**, the Prime Minister of India underscored the need to strengthen and reform intergovernmental organisations like WHO.
- The government of India has also been seen sidestepping the periodic advisories from the WHO in key aspects of COVID-19 management.
- It has leaned on the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the experience of several state governments — from Kerala and Uttar Pradesh to Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

- **Instances where India varied with WHO advisory**
 - **Travel restrictions to China:**
 - On January 30, 2020, WHO did not recommend travel restrictions to China despite the **WHO's International Health Regulations Emergency Committee** raising a global alert on the need for containment, surveillance, detection, isolation, and even contact tracing.
 - But, India's first advisory on avoiding non-essential travel to China dated January 25, 2020, was already in place.
 - **Indiscriminate Testing:**
 - On March 16, 2020 WHO's key message was "test test test"(indiscriminate testing).
 - But on March 22, ICMR said that there would be **no indiscriminate testing and only isolation.**
 - Hours later, India went into **lockdown**, starting with 75 districts and then, from midnight of March 24, the whole country.
 - The decision was based on a **paper by ICMR that quarantine is a more effective way of containing the virus than even airport screening.**
 - **Treatment :**
 - WHO's clinical care guidelines clearly say that there is **no current evidence to recommend any specific anti-COVID-19 treatment** for patients.
 - India, nevertheless, first included **two of its undertrial antivirals — lopinavir and ritonavir** — in its clinical care guidelines for patients of the novel coronavirus disease.
 - It then revised the management guidelines to replace the antivirals with a combination of **hydroxychloroquine and the antibiotic azithromycin.**
 - It has, however, recently announced its decision to be a part of a **global drug trial** anchored by the WHO.

Source: IE