



WHO Foundation

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Why in News

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has created a foundation that will enable it to tap new sources of funding, including the general public.

Key Points

- **Status:** Legally independent from the WHO. This will facilitate contributions from the general public (philanthropic contributions).
- **Headquarter:** Geneva, Switzerland (WHO is also headquartered in Geneva).
- **Objective:** Support global public health needs, from prevention, mental health, and non-communicable diseases to emergency preparedness, outbreak response and health system strengthening.

In view of the **Covid-19 pandemic**, the WHO Foundation will initially focus on **emergencies and pandemic response**.

- **Goal:** Broaden WHO's donor base and work towards more sustainable and predictable funding.

It will provide funds to WHO and trusted implementing partners in order to achieve WHO's "**triple billion**" goals. These goals aim to:

- **Protect:** Protect 1 billion people from health emergencies.
 - **Universal Health Coverage:** Extend universal health coverage to 1 billion people.
 - **Health and Wellbeing:** Assure healthy lives and wellbeing to 1 billion people by 2023.
- **Promising Initiative:** The success of **Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund**, which has been able to raise around \$214 million from more than 4,00,000 individuals and companies in just two and a half months highlights the **potential this "foundation" can have in tapping potential resources**.

Background

- WHO has little discretion over the way it spends its funds. A **robust and more reliable funding mechanism** was needed.
 - Less than 20% of WHO's budget comes in the form of flexible assessed contributions from Member States, while more than 80% is voluntary contributions, from Member States and other donors, which are **usually tightly earmarked for specific programmes**. In effect, that means WHO has little discretion over the way it spends its funds.
- **WHO's Funding:** 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.
- It can be noted that recently the **United States stopped its contributions to WHO**, pending a review of its response to the initial Covid-19 outbreak.

Way Forward

- Over the past few decades, the WHO has been the **global leader** in numerous pandemics and outbreaks, including HIV/AIDS, Zika and Ebola. **Historical experiences and a strong understanding of cultural contexts** puts WHO in a prime position of a global leader to tackle coronavirus pandemic.
- **Additional funding** can help the agency invest in some of its least funded areas such as diet, air quality, water and sanitation, investment in clean energy and promotion of healthy, sustainable food systems.
- In this context, the establishment of this new funding mechanism offers a promise of building a better world after this pandemic. A world with focus on not just diseases but that on **promoting good health**.

Source: Livemint