



## 76th Annual World Health Assembly

**For Prelims:** [World Health Organization](#), [World Health Assembly](#), [G20](#), [Ayushman Bharat](#)

**For Mains:** India's participation in the World Health Assembly, World Health Organisation functioning, Significance of India's contributions in medical value travel

### Why in News?

Recently, the 76<sup>th</sup> annual [World Health Assembly](#) was held at [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Headquarters\(HQ\)](#), Geneva, **Switzerland**, from **21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023**.

- The theme for 2023 is "**WHO at 75: Saving lives, driving health for all.**"
- The participation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Health Minister in the 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly highlighted **India's commitment to global health**.
- **Taiwan was excluded from the WHO assembly** due to **opposition from China and Pakistan**.

### What is the World Health Assembly?

- **About:**
  - **The World Health Assembly (WHA)** is WHO's decision-making body attended by delegations from all of WHO's member states.
  - It is held yearly at the HQ of WHO, i.e., **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- **Functions of WHA:**
  - Deciding on Organization's policies.
  - Appointment of the Director-General of WHO.
  - Administration of financial policies.
  - Review and approval of the proposed programme budget.

### What are the Key Highlights?

- **Global Plan for Indigenous Health:**
  - **Draft resolution accepted for developing a Global Plan of Action for the Health of [Indigenous People](#).**
    - The plan will be considered at the 79<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in 2026.
  - Consultation with indigenous peoples and their free, prior, and informed consent emphasized.
  - Addressing challenges such as **poverty, violence, discrimination, and limited access to healthcare**.
  - Focus on **reproductive, maternal, and [adolescent health](#), vulnerable situations**.
  - Members were urged to collect ethical data to identify specific requirements of indigenous people.
  - Aimed at **improving the health and well-being of indigenous populations**.
- **Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention:**
  - **Global Alliance for Drowning Prevention** was established during the 76th WHA

meeting.

- Aims to **address global public health concerns related to drowning** by 2029.
- WHO to coordinate **action and prepare a global status report on drowning**.
- Drowning has a significant impact on the world's poorest populations.
  - Over **90% of drowning deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries**.
- Official global estimate of drowning deaths may be significantly underestimated as they exclude **drownings attributable to flood related climatic events and water transport incidents**.
- **Draft Resolution on Chemicals, Waste, and Pollution:**
  - **Draft resolution on chemicals, waste, and pollution impact accepted** during 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly.
  - WHO urged to **update Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals report with United Nations Environment Programme**.
  - **Limited data on chemical exposures and health concerns highlighted**.
  - Resolution encourages **regulatory frameworks, biomonitoring, and risk identification** for chemicals of concern such as cadmium, lead, mercury etc.
  - Concern over poor chemical waste management and long-term health effects are raised.
  - Request for WHO report on human health implications and data gaps.
  - Importance of **data organization by sex, age, disability, and harmful substances**.
- **WHO Program Budget:**
  - WHO member states agreed on a budget of 6.83 billion USD for 2024-2025, including a **20% increase in assessed contributions**.
  - Over the past few years, assessed contributions had declined, accounting for **less than one-quarter of WHO's financing**.
  - Top contributors include **Germany, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, US, UK, and European Commission**.
  - WHO's reliance on voluntary contributions raises governance concerns and affects sustained technical cooperation and goal achievement.
  - Highlighted contributions that hinder the WHO's ability to provide effective technical cooperation and achieve the **Triple Billion targets** for improving health of all by 2023.

#### **Note:**

**Triple billion Targets:** The goals of the Triple Billions are simple and straightforward. By 2023, WHO proposes to achieve:

- 1 billion more people benefitting from universal health coverage
  - 1 billion more people better protected from health emergencies
  - 1 billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.
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- **Replenishment Mechanism:**
    - Member states welcomed a **new replenishment mechanism to provide flexible funding options for the WHO**.
    - Currently, the **majority of WHO's funds** come from **specific voluntary contributions**, leaving little flexibility for shifting funds as needed.
    - The replenishment mechanism aims to **raise voluntary contributions to cover the unfunded portion of WHO's base segment** and ensure financial sustainability.

#### **WHO Funding:**

- **Assessed contributions:**
  - Calculated as a percentage of a country's gross domestic product.
  - **Account for less than 20% of the total budget of WHO**
  - Approved every two years at the World Health Assembly.
- **Voluntary contributions:**
  - Account for more than **three quarters** of the Organization's financing.
  - Come from **Member States and other partners**.
  - Further categorized based on flexibility:
    - **Core voluntary contributions (CVC):**

- Fully **unconditional** and flexible, representing **4.1% of all voluntary contributions**.
- **Thematic and strategic engagement funds:**
  - **Partially flexible**, representing 7.9% of all voluntary contributions in 2020-2021.
- **Specified voluntary contributions:**
  - Tightly **earmarked to specific programmatic areas** and/or geographical locations, representing 88% of all voluntary contributions.
- **Pandemic Response Funding:**
  - WHO receives additional funding from various sources in response to global health emergencies, including pandemics.
  - The **Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund** was established during the COVID-19 pandemic to receive contributions from governments, organizations, and individuals.
- **India's Participation:**
  - Emphasized the importance of collaboration and resilient global health systems.
  - Highlighted India's contribution of **300 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to over 100 countries**.
  - Stressed the significance of traditional systems like **Yoga** and **Ayurveda**.
  - Mentioned the establishment of **WHO's Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India**.
  - Supported the **G20** theme of '**One Earth, One Family, One Future**'.
  - Shared India's achievements in healthcare and the **Ayushman Bharat scheme**.
  - Expressed willingness to support WHO in low and middle-income countries.
  - Highlighted India's contributions in Medical Value Travel and commitment to **Tuberculosis elimination**.
  - Emphasized the '**Heal by India**' initiative, promoting **AYUSH treatments globally**.
  - Stressed the importance of **inclusive growth and healthcare for all**.

**Source: DTE**

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