

IHP news 723 : G7 summit in Hiroshima & Geneva part 1

(20 May 2023)

The weekly International Health Policies (IHP) newsletter is an initiative of the Health Policy unit at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium.

Dear colleagues,

As I'm in Geneva, I've decided to try something different this week, in order to keep the amount of information a bit manageable for you. So instead of one big newsletter next Friday, I'll send a few updates this week. With the first one today, focusing on some **early news & reports from the World Health Assembly**, the **G7 summit in Hiroshima** & a few more things.

Enjoy your reading.

Kristof Decoster

Highlights of the week

The read of the weekend

Lancet - Offline: The case for global health

R Horton; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01005-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01005-X/fulltext)

Last Friday, this essay went viral on [Twitter](#). When you read the third paragraph in particular, you'll understand why. The backlash Horton endured is surely a sign of the times that something very substantial has to change in global health, if it is to survive. I'm still puzzled why he wrote the third paragraph the way he did.

G7 summit in Hiroshima (19-20 May)

G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100506878.pdf>

Sections 33-35 relate to global health. Worth to read them in full.

Check out, among others, this section:

*“...In this regards, we will continue to contribute to ongoing processes, including in the G20, on an end-to-end MCM ecosystem, aligned with the ongoing discussions on the WHO CA+ and which should actively contribute to the diversification of MCM production and address the priority of the most vulnerable partner’s needs and expectations, including in terms of global governance, in cooperation with relevant partners including the WHO, the WB, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the 25 Global Fund, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) and Unitaid and Medicines Patent Pool, regional organizations and the private sector. **To this end, we announce the G7 Hiroshima Vision for Equitable Access to MCMs and launch the MCM Delivery Partnership for equitable access (MCDP) to contribute to more equitable access to and delivery of MCMs based on the principles of equity, inclusivity, efficiency, affordability, quality, accountability, agility and speed.** We commit to work across providers of development finance, for the purpose of identifying concrete options this summer for providing for the liquidity for global health organizations to procure and deliver MCMs earlier in a crisis. This supports **the mapping exercise for surge financing to be conducted by the WHO and World Bank and presented at the G20 Finance and Health Task Force and the UNGA HLM, contributing to ongoing negotiations on the WHO CA+....”***

For all Hiroshima summit documents, see <https://www.g7hiroshima.go.jp/en/documents/>

Including: [G7 Hiroshima Vision for Equitable Access to Medical Countermeasures](#) (1 p).

People’s Vaccine – Scientists warn G7 leaders of critical vulnerabilities in pandemic preparedness

<https://peoplesvaccine.org/resources/media-releases/scientists-warn-g7-critical-pandemic-preparedness-2023/>

Letter sent before the Leaders’ summit. **“Scientists have warned G7 leaders that the world is not prepared for the next pandemic and, without urgent action, will repeat the inequality of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout in the next health crisis. In a [letter](#) ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima, some of the world’s foremost public health experts want to ensure that low and middle-income countries can access and produce vaccines, tests, and treatments in the next pandemic....”**

Some more pre-analysis of the World Health Assembly

From end of last week.

HPW - Sexual Health Derailed the Last World Health Assembly; What Are This Year's Flashpoints?

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/sexual-health-derailed-the-last-world-health-assembly-what-are-this-years-flashpoints/>

*“Much of this year’s [WHA agenda](#), being held in Geneva between 21 and 30 May, should be preoccupied with **pandemic preparedness and the WHO’s budget**. But **there are some obscure items for anti-rights conservatives to latch onto if they want to derail discussion** – and there is growing appetite for such disruptions throughout all UN agencies.”*

Devex CheckUp: Decisions to watch at the 76th World Health Assembly

<https://www.devex.com/news/devex-checkup-decisions-to-watch-at-the-76th-world-health-assembly-105525>

*“**What many folks in global health and WHO will be looking out for is financing**. This is the year when countries are meant to put into action what they agreed to last year — i.e., **gradually increase their assessed contributions to WHO**. The [first increase of 20%](#) is expected this year as they approve WHO’s 2024-2025 budget. Even if it’s not a firm obligation, there are expectations for member states to follow through, including from Björn Kümmel, who chaired the WHO working group that made that happen. When we last spoke, he said it **would be “devastating” for any member state to renege.**”*

*“But it’s not the only money question facing WHO member states. **They will also decide whether to greenlight WHO to conduct a replenishment called “investment rounds.”** There’s no target amount yet, but if countries approve, the first pledging event will take place in the second half of 2024, so as not to compete with other organizations planning to hold their own replenishment events in 2025, such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund.”*

*“Also on the agenda: **Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus’ 10-point proposal to strengthen the global architecture for health emergency preparedness and response**, which includes a discussion on access to medical products that have been dubbed “countermeasures.”*

*“**What we’re not expecting: amendments to the International Health Regulations, which lists countries’ obligations during a global health emergency — and which many of them didn’t follow — and a pandemic agreement.** Those two will be up for consideration at next year’s WHA, although the body tasked to negotiate and draft the agreement will update member states on its work.”*

*“Another thing we’ll be keeping an eye on at WHA is a **resolution calling on member states to increase access to medical oxygen**, which should focus attention on a lifesaving intervention that many low- and middle-income countries scrambled to get a hold of during the COVID-19 emergency....”*

Geneva Health Files - Medical Countermeasures Platform will be Pitched to Countries Next Week. Inadequate Consultations, Squeamish about IP, Activists Say

P Patnaik; https://genevahealthfiles.substack.com/p/medical-countermeasures-platform?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

From last Friday. *“This story takes a look at the progress in the discussions on a new medical countermeasures platform that will be discussed at the World Health Assembly next week, as a part of a wider set of proposals by DG Tedros on the health emergencies architecture.”*

“...The new Medical Countermeasures Platform will be pitched to countries next week at the 76th World Health Assembly, as a part of the “HEPR” proposals by DG Tedros. (HEPR - Strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience). Several WHO member states indicate that they have not been consulted. Activists involved in the discussions say that there have not been any significant consultations with countries. And the platform as discussed today refrains from addressing intellectual property barriers in the access to countermeasures especially during health emergencies, they say....”

SID - BANKING ON HEALTH: the surging pandemic of health financialization

N Dentico; https://g2h2.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/HF_policy.pdf

20 p. **Important policy brief.** Focusing on Geneva’s “poster boy” IFFIm and much more.

“...The financialization of health redirect public finance from the structural need countries face today to sustainably mobilize adequate domestic resources to fund healthcare, including policies aimed at effectively preventing and preparing for potential new pandemics. Reverting this course of things will be a long journey. In 2020, Covid-19 had lit the light of societal recognition to the importance of public health services and structures, to contain the contagion and manage the emergency. After the pandemic crisis, new forms of public administration of private interests within the state have been asserted. With the blessing of the international community, a new architecture driven by a recently bred hierarchy of digital solutions is moving health securitization forward through the logic of immunity as the new organizing principle....”

“... As the right to health is being redesigned to remain solidly ancillary to financial markets and inexorable privatization trends, the global public health community must urgently raise the visual spectrum beyond diseases and biomedical solutions to frontally address the speculative dynamics of finance advancing in the health sector....”

Andrew Harmer (blog) - WHO’s Financing Mechanism: What, Why And For Whom?

<https://andrewharmer.org/2023/05/18/whos-financing-mechanism-what-why-and-for-whom/>

Well worth a read, this analysis re the “merits” and many downsides of a replenishment proposal for WHO. *“... It’s an understatement to say that [A76/32](#) ‘Sustainable financing: feasibility of a replenishment mechanism, including options for consideration’ reflects a significant shift in thinking about the way that WHO should and will be funded in the future. Perhaps the best way to structure a critique of the document is through three key concepts that underpin the WGSF’s*

understanding of sustainability: flexibility, predictability, and priority setting. I think this is a more useful approach than to structure the critique around the WGSF's six 'principles'"

76th World Health Assembly (21-30 May, Geneva)

Documents, early agenda, https://apps.who.int/gb/e/e_wha76.html

Among others: [Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies](#)
[Strengthening the global architecture for health emergency preparedness, response and resilience](#)
was just published.

According to **Nina Schwalbe** (via Twitter): [The main takeaway? WHO is positioning itself as the leader of the global effort.](#)

And plenty more preparatory documents & reports, obviously.

WHO -Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly to focus on “saving lives, driving health for all” as WHO turns 75

<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-05-2023-seventy-sixth-world-health-assembly-to-focus-on--saving-lives--driving-health-for-all--as-who-turns-75>

Press release at the start of the WHA.

“As the world faces ongoing health and humanitarian emergencies, the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly will focus on driving forward health for all. This year’s session of the World Health Assembly will determine the immediate and longer-term future of WHO, starting with the program budget for the next two years, key decisions about the sustainable financing of the Organization and changes put in place to improve WHO’s processes and accountability. Delegates will also deliberate about the critical role that WHO has in the Global Health Emergency Architecture.”

“The backdrop to these issues is the organization’s 75th anniversary, with the highlights of its collective global health achievements since WHO’s creation in 1948. It will review last year’s progress, accomplishments and challenges along with future priorities across the key pillars of WHO’s work: Universal Health Coverage, Emergencies, Promoting Health and Well-being. ... Key discussions and decisions are expected on:

· A review of WHO’s work in health emergencies, including the International Health Regulations and strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies;

· Strategies and global action on areas such as women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health, rehabilitation, universal health coverage and primary health care, traditional medicine, infection

prevention and control, substandard and falsified medicines, health of refugees and migrants, non-communicable diseases, mental health, social determinants, nutrition and disabilities;

• **Approval of the [WHO Programme Budget for 2024-2025](#), including the decision to increase assessed contributions and other matters emanating from the Working Group on Sustainable Financing.”**

WHO Director-General announces Global Health Leaders Awards

<https://www.who.int/news/item/18-05-2023-who-director-general-announces-global-health-leaders-awards>

“Jean-Jacques Muyembe-Tamfum and Peter Piot awarded for lifelong commitment to health.”

World health statistics 2023: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240074323>

Came out last Friday. *“The 2023 edition reviews more than 50 health-related indicators from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 13).”*

- WHO - [Urgent action needed to tackle stalled progress on health-related Sustainable Development Goals](#)

(the press release on the World Health Statistics report)

On the Covid toll: *“... The report documents updated statistics on the toll of the pandemic on global health, contributing to the ongoing decline in progress towards the SDGs. During 2020-2021, COVID-19 resulted in a staggering 336.8 million years of life lost globally. This equates to an average of 22 years of life lost for every excess death, abruptly and tragically cutting short the lives of millions of people....”*

...This year’s report includes for the first time a dedicated section on climate change and health....”

Some of the coverage via:

- HPW - [WHO Calls on Countries to “Drastically Reduce” Climate Emissions to Improve Global Health](#)

“The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for focused action to address global warming and climate change to promote health outcomes. Recommendations include concerted efforts to reduce carbon emissions, build climate-resilient and sustainable health systems and protect health from the impacts of climate change.”

“... There is also a decline in the treatment coverage for tuberculosis between 2019 and 2021, and a stall in the world’s progress to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like hypertension and adult obesity....”

“Climate and Health” is featured as a separate chapter in the latest edition of the [World Health Statistics Report](#), published by the WHO on Friday. This underlines its importance as a major driver of health outcomes in coming years, WHO officials said. “

*The 131-page annual compilation of health statistics, while providing a birds-eye view on the progress made on global health metrics, also **highlights how the world is not on track to achieve the targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.***

- UN News - [Chronic diseases taking ‘immense and increasing toll on lives’, warns WHO](#)

*“A new report from the World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that **non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, are claiming around three quarters of all lives lost each year.**”*

- Scroll.in - [Climate change can result in over 90 lakh deaths each year till end of century, says WHO report](#) (i.e. 9 million deaths)

WHO launches global network to detect and prevent infectious disease threats

<https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2023-who-launches-global-network-to--detect-and-prevent-infectious-disease-threats>

Launched today (Saturday 20 May).

*“WHO and partners are launching a global network to help protect people from infectious disease threats through the power of pathogen genomics. The **International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN)** will provide a platform to connect countries and regions, improving systems for collecting and analyzing samples, using these data to drive public health decision-making, and sharing that information more broadly*

.... The IPSN, with a Secretariat hosted by the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, brings together experts worldwide at the cutting-edge of genomics and data analytics, from governments, philanthropic foundations, multilateral organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. All share a common goal: to detect and respond to disease threats before they become epidemics and pandemics, and to optimize routine disease surveillance....”

Covid

Lancet World Report -With the COVID-19 PHEIC over, what next?

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01003-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01003-6/fulltext)

“With the formal declaration of a public health emergency of international concern ending, what are the implications for international response efforts? John Zarocostas reports from Geneva.”

Stat - WHO recommends updates to Covid vaccines reflecting new variants

<https://www.statnews.com/>

From end of last week. *“Because SARS-CoV-2 is still with us and evolving, **vaccines to combat the virus must evolve, too, the WHO said yesterday, calling for updated formulations of Covid vaccines that reflect newer variants that are circulating, such as XBB.1 descendant lineages.** The global health agency still recommends people get the currently available vaccines if they haven't already. Some data points: Despite gaps in surveillance around the world, the available sequencing data indicates the original virus and early variants (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta) are no longer detected in people. Blood samples from people who got two, three, or four doses of the original Covid vaccines or a bivalent mRNA booster show substantially lower neutralizing antibody levels against XBB.1 lineages compared to levels for the antigens included in the vaccine. People with hybrid immunity from any SARS-CoV-2 infection show higher neutralizing antibody levels against XBB.1 lineages compared to vaccinated people with no evidence of infection.”*

See also **Reuters** - [A World Health Organization \(WHO\) advisory group on Thursday recommended that this year's COVID-19 booster shots be updated to target one of the currently dominant XBB variants.](#)

BMJ Opinion - Planning for the next pandemic: what *The BMJ's* research team learnt from covid-19

E Loder & J Clark; <https://www.bmj.com/content/381/bmj.p1137>

“Journals must be fast and flexible while safeguarding the quality of science.”

Hepatitis conference (17 May, Geneva)

Devex - High hopes but low pledges for hepatitis conference in Geneva

<https://www.devex.com/news/high-hopes-but-low-pledges-for-hepatitis-conference-in-geneva-105550>

*“The **Global Hepatitis Resource Mobilization Conference** — co-hosted by The Hepatitis Fund, the [Clinton Health Access Initiative](#), or CHAI, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt — kicked off a campaign Wednesday to raise an initial \$150 million but **very few financial commitments had been made by the end of the day....**”*

Cholera

UN News - One billion people in 43 countries face cholera risk, amid 'bleak' outlook

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136822>

“After years of steady decline, cholera is making a devastating comeback and targeting the world’s most vulnerable communities, UN health experts warned on Friday.”

“In a new alert, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said that more countries now face outbreaks, increasing numbers of cases are being reported and the outcome for patients is worse than 10 years ago.The UN health agency estimates that one billion people in 43 countries are at risk of cholera with children under five particularly vulnerable.”

Decolonize Global Health

Lancet (early online)- Towards anti-racist policies and strategies to reduce poor health outcomes in racialised communities: introducing the O’Neill–Lancet Commission on Racism, Structural Discrimination, and Global Health

Ngozi A Erondy et al ; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)00910-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)00910-8/fulltext)

Introducing this – important -Commission.

Planetary Health

Guardian - Fossil fuel firms owe climate reparations of \$209bn a year, says study

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/19/fossil-fuel-firms-owe-climate-reparations-of-209bn-a-year-says-study>

“Groundbreaking analysis by One Earth is first to quantify economic burden caused by individual companies.”

“The world’s top fossil fuel companies owe at least \$209bn in annual climate reparations to compensate communities most damaged by their polluting business and decades of lies, a new study calculates. BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Total, Saudi Arabia’s state oil company and Chevron are among the largest 21 polluters responsible for \$5.4tn (£4.3tn) in drought, wildfires, sea level rise, and melting glaciers among other climate catastrophes expected between 2025 and 2050, according to groundbreaking analysis published in the [journal One Earth](#). It is the first time researchers have quantified the economic burden caused by individual companies that have extracted – and continue

to extract – wealth from planet heating fossil fuels. Amid growing debate about who should bear the economic cost of the climate crisis, **the paper, titled Time to Pay the Piper**, presents a moral case for the carbon corporations most responsible for the climate breakdown to use some of their “tainted wealth” to compensate victims.....”

Guardian - More than half of the world’s lakes have shrunk in past 30 years, study finds

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/19/more-than-half-of-the-worlds-lakes-have-shrunk-in-past-30-years-study-finds?CMP=share_btn_tw

“Lakes and reservoirs have lost 22 gigatonnes a year since 1992, driven by factors including global heating and human consumption.”

Miscellaneous

WHO - Integration of noncommunicable diseases into HIV service packages: technical brief

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/367861>

Technical brief.

BMJ GH - Breaking the silence on gendered harassment and assault of community health workers: an analysis of ethnographic studies

<https://gh.bmj.com/content/8/5/e011749>

By S Closser et al.

CGD - How Do Non-DAC Actors Cooperate on Development?

<https://www.cgdev.org/publication/how-do-non-dac-actors-cooperate-development>

“...this paper maps the landscape of non-DAC cooperation providers with the view of understanding how they engage in development cooperation.”