

IHP news 743 : #UNGA78 (continued)

(22 September 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,

After Wednesday morning's [mid-week IHP issue](#), we continue our focus on #UNGA78 in this Friday edition.

Given the state of the world, it's perhaps good to go through some analyses on the **general backdrop** against which this year's General Assembly is taking place. We already flagged a few in Wednesday's issue, but you might also want to have a look at ["Reform, climate, and prevention: Three key themes as UNGA kicks off"](#) (pre- UNGA analysis by [Irwin Loy](#) in the *New Humanitarian*). A quote on the 'reform' part: *"... If UN Secretary-General António Guterres has his way, then this general assembly session [will mark] a step forward for multilateralism and solidarity in a polarised world. A big part of regaining trust in the multilateral system, he said, is to address global finance's long-standing power imbalances, which have saddled countries in the Global South with tougher lending policies, inadequate support after disasters, and rising debt..."* Clearly, that's easier said than done, and clearly Guterres didn't 'get his way' this UNGA week either. But let's hope at least some progress was made. Meanwhile, in a panel discussion on Tuesday, **Winnie Byanyima** framed the challenge (and blatant injustice) more succinctly: **"Africa paid \$79 billion in debt repayments out of the continent in 2021, but the Pandemic Fund is just \$2b?"** And that's just one example.

In an increasingly fragmented world (where "multilateralism" is mainly something [used for rhetorical purposes only](#), together with 'Global Solidarity' and a few other terms), Guterres' **UN 2.0** vision (to strengthen the organization's capacities for a 'modern, agile and future-forward UN system' (*ahum*)) sounds like [a very tall order](#). The organization won't end like the League of Nations in the years to come, we reckon, but "muddling through" feels like a rather likely scenario - even if Guterres himself argues it's [either 'reform or rupture'](#). We do need [a performant UN](#) more than ever. Here's to hoping that next year's 'Summit of the Future' will be a milestone in this respect.

Anyway. In addition to compiling coverage from colleagues on the [three UN High-Level meetings on health](#) (re PPPR (Wednesday), UHC (Thursday) and TB (today)), we also briefly come back on the **SDG summit** (and ongoing discussion on the need for an "SDG reset"), **the Climate Ambition summit**, [the annual Goalkeepers event](#), the **Financing for Development HL Dialogue**, and much more.

Let's hope all these "high-level events", summits & breakfasts will prove their worth in the months and years to come. As it's indeed a scary world we live in, now. The abovementioned *New Humanitarian* (pre-)analysis again: ["What connects many of the priorities of this UNGA session is a push to prevent future risks from spiralling – wherever those risks may come from."](#) Indeed,

UNGA78 also aimed to **focus on Prevention**, or “digging at the roots of tomorrow’s crises’. (Yes, I hear you, *that’s a bit late, given that in many cases, ‘tomorrow’ is ‘today’ already...*)

As for **Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response**, Rachel Cohen nailed it in a tweet after the adoption of the PPPR declaration on Wednesday: “*And just like that...the Political Declaration on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response was adopted this morning at #UNGA78. Now all eyes are on the #WHO #PandemicAccord negotiations to transform platitudes about #equity into binding rules that will save lives.*” However, [not just in New York](#), probably also in Geneva **health is increasingly falling off the agenda** of top decision makers & politicians, so all pressure from civil society and others will be welcome. The same goes for implementing all the lofty UHC rhetoric at the national level in the years to come. Do awaken your ‘inner Rob Yates’ if you can :)

As for the **climate**, the current crisis (*which is bad enough*) needs far more attention from all corners in society, certainly including the media. Earlier this week **Covering Climate Now** argued, in a Guardian Op-ed, “[The media needs to cover the climate crisis as seriously as it covered Covid.](#)” So far most of them (still) don’t. Fortunately, at least Guterres’ gifted speechwriter provides them with a nice metaphor almost every week. This week’s [‘Humanity has opened the gates to hell’](#) quote, at the Climate Ambition summit, was a great new addition. We bet the speechwriter is an AC/DC fan. (*and let’s face it, if we do end up in a ‘boiling world’, at least the [short trousers](#) will come in handy.*)

Enjoy your reading.

Kristof Decoster

Featured Article

Disruption catalyses progress – and young feminists remain the biggest disruptors at #UNGA78

Shakira Choonara

Time flies when you’re having fun, it’s already over 1.5 years since I started providing support to the [Generation Equality Action Coalition on Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#). Through this role at UN Women, I work closely with governments, the private sector, civil society and youth-led organizations, it’s really seeing and revelling first hand at the “multi-stakeholder” model we keep talking about in global health. The incredible learnings, great moments and experiences are for another blog or another panel (*hint, you are welcome to already invite me to [HSR 2024](#), Nagasaki, I promise I have some good stories to share over sushi*) 🍣

Okay, back to reality and this year’s United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78). I am certainly not in any position to determine who the most powerful disruptors at this UNGA78 are but I do have a strong opinion on the matter.

Indeed, hands down, the young feminists who spoke at the Generation Equality Midpoint Moment Youth Spotlight during the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit earlier this week, showed us the power of youth leadership coupled with a strong sense of responsibility and accountability (you can watch more here, starting from [2 hrs 33](#)).

I have been in tonnes of global health spaces, and unfortunately, I often watch youth not really pushing the boundaries, and instead pretty much regurgitate the usual development '[blah blah blah](#)' (as [Greta Thunberg mentioned in her epic 2021 speech](#)). Like Greta, I just tend to fall sound asleep then. Occasionally, however, like a shooting star, we do spot a speaker who really shakes up the conferences and discussions. But in this case, we were fortunate to have an *entire youth-led feminist panel* do so. They were totally rocking.

Below I have put together snippets of each of the interventions offered by these powerful young speakers who reflected on Generation Equality, the structures, their roles, their vision, their struggles, their own accountability and their recommendations. These young feminists came prepared with an entire PowerPoint presentation on how they plan to set up a Watchdog for accountability, funding and sustainability of the youth agenda.

“Sitting next to an indigenous speaker and our moderator, I would say things are already changing” - Alejandra Nohora Quiguntar, AC Youth Leader, Tejiendo Pensamiento

“Young people have disrupted every single structure in Generation Equality, I do not underestimate how much trouble we were to those in the room today” - Zahra Al Hilaly, former Generation Equality Youth Task Force Member

“At the midpoint moment for Generation Equality, I ask you, where are the resources, where is the accountability, where is the decision-making, who is sharing the power? The Young Feminist Manifesto speaks to intersectionality, we need to deepen these principles! How can we take what we are doing back to our regions, our countries, our home” - Jeevika Shiv, Cocreator Feminist March; Advisor the YP Foundation; National Gender Youth Activist NGYA to UN Women

“The fact that adolescents are in this room shows that disruption catalyses progress. There was a point where adolescents and youth were fighting for the same speaking spots, but we are fighting towards the same goal. We no longer exist in the same breath as we did two years ago, we need compensation and we need to be heard” - Ishanvi Malayani, Adolescent Girl Advisory Group

“Being an Action Coalition Leader has been transformative and challenging at the same time. There is a contest of power, coming into this space as a young person you have to retain your power and then reclaim the power. We have had to look for resources, sharing hotel rooms, it has meant activism outside of our working hours, and holding ourselves accountable. When there's closed door meetings, we call for accountability. We are dismantling colonialism by including those who are excluded, we are dismantling patriarchy including those who have been harmed in our spaces. This is what youth power is” - Esther Mwema, Founder of Digital Grassroots

“Generation Equality has helped us to connect and centre movement building, after all of the exclusion, we have allowed us to revive the Young Feminist Caucus in high-level spaces

such as the Commission Status of Women (CSW) and the Conference of Parties (COP). Generation Equality has allowed us to connect and be aligned” - Eunice Leyva Garcia, Executive Director, Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights

“Funding is still not going to where it is needed most, it is not going to youth-led feminist organizations” - Ms Xenia Kellner, Young Feminist Europe

“When we first came to the UN, we entered spaces which did not feel at home, these spaces are not made for us. Together with my peers, I learnt it’s okay to go knocking on the doors of diplomacy because we cannot wait a day longer” - Ayshka Najib, Fridays for Future MAPA

All I can say is these young feminist leaders showed us total flames at UNGA78. These perspectives are food-for-thought for all of the spaces around us. Things are definitely changing and for the better, because a mere seven years ago when I attended the adoption of the SDGs at UNGA, we held a flag and lanterns only, that was the extent of our engagement. Watch more for a rant [in my young days](#) as proof that the wheel is definitely turning and for the better.

**This blog is penned in a personal capacity and is not representative of any organization or entity*

Highlights of the week

The read of the week

Offline: Political declarations—clichés and lies

R Horton; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02023-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02023-8/fulltext)

Harsh, perhaps, but not wrong, I’m afraid.

“...when one reads the three Political Declarations published to coincide with High-Level Meetings at the UN General Assembly in New York this week—on pandemic prevention, universal health coverage (UHC), and tuberculosis—**one cannot help but be struck by the bland, indeed narcotic, nature of the language agreed by ministerial negotiating teams.** These Declarations say nothing new. They offer no fresh commitments. They recycle ancient promises. Even worse, **they are riven with clichés and lies....”** Horton then lists these clichés and lies.

And points to one political declaration that did actually get it right, in his view - **The Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs), adopted by governments in 2011** - a turning point in the history of global health, he argues.

Horton concludes: "...The only commitments assured are promises to return to New York in 2026 (pandemic prevention), 2027 (UHC), and 2028 (tuberculosis). **The result of this week's theatrical charade? Three missed opportunities. What a tragic waste.**"

UN High-Level meeting on PPPR (20 Sept)

HPW -UN High Level Meeting Approves 'Historic' but Non-Binding Declaration on Pandemic Preparedness and Response

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/world-leaders-agree-to-historic-but-non-binding-declaration-on-pandemic-preparedness-and-response/>

"A long awaited **political declaration** by UN member states on more effective pandemic preparedness and response was approved at a High Level Meeting on Wednesday – without the political objections raised by 11 member states last week clouding the process."

"The declaration is a milestone insofar as it signals recognition by the world's heads of state that pandemic threats are existential threats, much more than simply health emergencies, said Carolyn Reynolds, co-founder of the Pandemic Action Network, which has pushed for a broader approach to pandemic preparedness and response since the onset of the COVID pandemic: "Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response is so much more than a national health issue; it is a national and global security and economic issue. Like climate change, pandemics are a global systemic risk and existential threat to humanity, and we need to treat them as such."..."

"... At the same time, the declaration has been bitterly criticised as a text that is largely rhetorical and devoid of real commitments, beyond the commitment to convene another high level meeting in 2026. And during the member state comments following the plenary, heads of state from the world's leading countries were noticeably absent, with most of the interventions led by ministers of health. ..."

"... At least for the upcoming year, the ball is now back in the court of WHO member states, who must come to agreement on an effective pandemic accord that places equity at the center of global response, as well as revisions to WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR) that empower the World Health Organization to "sound the alarm rapidly with evidence and without bureaucracy..."

PS: "... A WHO Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) will resume meetings on the Geneva Pandemic Accord text and discussions on the text in November, with further meetings scheduled for December and January, said Dr Jaouad Mahjour, Head of WHO Secretariat supporting member state negotiations in the INB and in a parallel body for revisions to the IHR. ..."

... The declaration is a strong signal that countries are committed to learning the lesson of the COVID pandemic and strengthening the world's defenses against pandemics, said WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "

But it's not a binding document.

And “ Dr Tedros added that the **political declaration approved on Wednesday called for further strengthening of the global health emergency architecture** to better protect the world from a repeat of COVID-19.....”

- See also WHO - [WHO welcomes “historic” commitment by world leaders for greater collaboration, governance and investment to prevent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics](#)

Including: “ **The political declaration.... underscored the pivotal role played by WHO as the “directing and coordinating authority on international health,” and the need to “commit further to sustainable financing that provides adequate and predictable funding to the World Health Organization, which enables it to have the resources needed to fulfil its core functions.”...**”

Devex – Advocates say the UN pandemic meeting was a dud. What's next?

<https://www.devex.com/news/advocates-say-the-un-pandemic-meeting-was-a-dud-what-s-next-106240>

With more coverage of the HL event on PPPR. “.... UNGA President Dennis Francis approved on Wednesday the political declaration for the high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response with no objections. **The event was meant to galvanize high-level political support to strengthen global health security** after the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many gaps in the world’s ability to respond effectively to global health threats. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called it a “historic day for public health.” But **others were clearly disappointed. Advocates relentlessly followed the intergovernmental process for the declaration for months and hoped countries would commit to bold actions to ensure the world is better positioned for future pandemics.** But in the weeks leading up to the meeting, **many health leaders voiced concerns that the opportunity to do so was being lost, with the draft text lacking specifics such as the creation of a heads of state level body** that would ensure preparing for and addressing pandemics remain at the top of the political agenda. They **expected more from the declaration and the meeting — and were disappointed.**”

“.... **After the high-level meeting, countries, global health leaders, and civil society organizations are now focused on the process in Geneva to negotiate and establish a pandemic accord.** ... There are however **serious concerns on the current pace of the process, raising doubts whether the deadline of May 2024 will be met....**”

PS: “At a side event hosted by the Pandemic Action Network ahead of the meeting, **Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein**, a member of The Elders and former U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said by the end of the year — which is the two-year anniversary since WHO member states established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body — if there remains confusion and “no clear way forward” on the process, then calls should be made to bring the negotiations to New York....”

- Related: [Devex Check-up - UNGA’s pandemic declaration — historic or disappointing?](#)

“.... **it was clear from the statements of heads of state and government ministers at the meeting that they are eyeing the ongoing process in Geneva on a pandemic accord to address many of the**

issues that emerged during the COVID-19 global emergency — such as unequal access to vaccines and the limited capacities of many low- and middle-income countries to produce them.....”

UN HL meeting on UHC (21 Sept) (& other UHC snippets/analysis from UNGA78)

WHO - World leaders commit to redouble efforts towards universal health coverage by 2030

<https://www.who.int/news/item/21-09-2023-world-leaders-commit-to-redouble-efforts-towards-universal-health-coverage-by-2030>

Official WHO press statement. “Today, at the **United Nations (UN) General Assembly High-Level Meeting, world leaders have approved a new [Political Declaration](#) on “Universal Health Coverage (UHC): expanding our ambition for health and well-being in a post-COVID world”**. The declaration is hailed as a vital catalyst for the international community to take big and bold actions and mobilize the necessary political commitments and financial investments to attain the UHC target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.....”

PS: “It is estimated that an **additional US\$ 200–328 billion investment per year is needed to scale-up a PHC approach in low- and middle-income countries (e.g. up to approximately 3.3% of national gross domestic product)**. This could help health systems deliver up to 90% of essential health services, save at least 60 million lives and increase average life expectancy by 3.7 years by 2030....”

“... **Once adopted by the UN General Assembly**, the Political Declaration will be regularly monitored for implementation to identify gaps and solutions to accelerate progress, and discussed at the next dedicated UN High-Level Meeting in 2027.”

HPW - UN Universal Health Coverage Declaration: Paper Promise or Funded Reality?

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/un-universal-health-coverage-declaration-paper-promise-or-funded-reality/>

Coverage of the UN HL meeting.

“**While the United Nations (UN) high-level meeting (HLM) on universal health coverage (UHC) adopted a [political declaration](#) on Thursday committing member states to accelerating health for all, this will remain a paper promise unless governments invest in primary healthcare.** “

“**This was the challenge issued to member states by World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at the start of the HLM.....**” “Tedros then **made three requests of member states**: make UHC “the central policy priority for your government”; increase domestic investments in primary health care, health workers and financial protection starting with the most vulnerable; and to address the drivers of poor health in “the food people eat, the air they breathe and the conditions in which they live and work.” ...”

PS: “Addressing the HLM, the US and Norway explicitly called for UHC to be inclusive of LGBTQI people....”

Related tweet **Katri Bertram**: “Guess we can already conclude that **the silver-lining of this #health #HLM is many countries standing up to defend #SRHR (and some #LGBTBQI rights). #UHCHLM**”

See also **UN News** – [Healthcare: Lack of universal coverage, ‘human rights tragedy on a massive scale’](#)

“World leaders on Thursday agreed to boost efforts to provide universal health coverage for all by 2030. By approving a new political declaration at UN Headquarters during the high level meeting, Member States also pledged to take concrete action and provide the necessary funding to reach the ambitious goal. **The declaration – [Universal Health Coverage: expanding our ambition for health and well-being in a post-COVID world](#) – also saw governments promise to invest political capital in the push to expand universal care.**”

In theory, that is :)

With quotes from **Tedros** (‘achieving UHC is a political choice first of all’), **Amina Mohamed** (UN deputy-SG) (among others on the importance of SRHR in UHC), ...

David Legge (blog) - Shadow boxing in the Universal Health Coverage debate

<https://johnmenadue.com/shadow-boxing-in-the-universal-health-coverage-debate/>

Must-read. “Shadow boxing around “universal health coverage” instead of “universal access to healthcare” in the UN General Assembly reflects deeper tensions around the direction of the world economy.”

Legge concludes: “...As a policy forum, the UNGA provides space for L&MICs to be heard but, **outside the General Assembly, policy implementation is largely driven by the World Bank, the big US philanthropies, the G7, and the big bilateral aid providers.** However, the governors of the global regime remain concerned about the perceived legitimacy of this regime and the need to (at least appear to) address denial of access and healthcare impoverishment. **PHM calls upon civil society organisations and social and political movements to amplify their critique of the failures of the UHC promise (and the promise of the SDGs more broadly) but to link this critique to an explication of the ways the current regime of capitalist globalisation reproduces global inequality and unequal exchange.** Political leaders in the global South must be encouraged to stand aside from the shadow boxing and **demand real action on health care access, including the structural reforms needed to ensure adequate health care budgets.**”

Civil society Commentary on the tracking UHC: 2023 Global Monitoring report

<https://csemonline.net/project/civil-society-commentary-on-the-tracking-universal-health-coverage-2023-global-monitoring-report-gmr/>

8-pager.

“The purpose of this commentary is to highlight civil society’s calls to action for governments based on the results of the 2023 GMR and civil society perspectives on progress toward UHC. To enhance accountability and tracking of progress on the implementation of the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage 2019: “Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world” and SDG 3.8, the CSEM and partners organized 37 civil society country- and regional-level consultations in 2021 and 2022 as part of the State of the UHC Commitment Review. The consultations captured stories, experiences, and perspectives from civil society and communities on progress made toward achieving UHC. This commentary represents the perspectives of civil society based on data collected from the country consultations and is meant to complement and strengthen the GMR, which does not include data from civil society....”

On service coverage, financial hardship & impact of Covid-19 – and with an 8-fold call to action.

IDS - Future health systems: right here, right now

G Bloom; <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/future-health-systems-right-here-right-now/>

“In complex and rapidly changing health systems and societies, there are no realistic transferable blueprints to guide countries’ strategies for accelerating progress towards [Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#). Instead, governments must work with a range of actors through innovative partnerships to understand, learn from and navigate these transformations and their implications for health and health systems.”

“In 2008, Hilary Standing and I [co-authored a paper](#) looking forward to what we called “**Future Health Systems**”. We identified **three important trends likely to influence future strategies for strengthening health systems: the emergence of mixed (public/private) health systems, the rapid development of digital health and the growing importance of large middle-income countries....”**

Bloom concludes: **Future health systems are right here, right now.**

UN HL meeting on TB (22 Sept)

Taking place this afternoon.

Lancet Infectious Diseases - The TB Vaccine Accelerator Council: harnessing the power of vaccines to end the tuberculosis epidemic

Tedros et al; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(23\)00589-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(23)00589-3/fulltext)

“...We believe that the tuberculosis field will benefit from similar high-level coordination [i.e. like during the Covid pandemic], which is why **WHO is establishing the TB Vaccine Accelerator Council to catalyse high-level commitment, engagement, and alignment among funders, global agencies, governments, and communities, to identify and overcome the major barriers to tuberculosis vaccine development.** The council will work to boost the tuberculosis vaccine pipeline and facilitate the licensing and use of safe and effective tuberculosis vaccines, through partnership-based, innovative solutions to close crucial gaps in knowledge and financing. The council would also

consider how to rapidly manufacture and distribute vaccines equitably and at scale once they are available, drawing on lessons learned from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic....”

SDG summit (& other SDGs related news/analysis)

Nature (News) - World recommits to 2030 plan to save humanity — despite falling short so far

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02970-2>

Nature’s coverage of the SDG summit from Monday-Tuesday. “United Nations secretary-general António Guterres **proposes US\$500 billion annual stimulus package to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.**”

PS: “**Paula Caballero**, the former Colombian diplomat who was [instrumental in creating the SDGs’ framework](#), says that the world needs to take bold and transformational action now to accomplish the SDG agenda.....”

“... For Caballero, the SDG summit is also evidence that the goals are focusing minds on the integrated nature of the challenges facing humanity. But she says that **the UN system is still making the mistake of treating sustainable development and climate as separate issues, including by holding separate SDG and climate summits in New York this week.** “The only way you’re going to deliver on climate mitigation and adaptation is through the SDGs, and you can’t meet the SDGs unless you deal with climate,” she says. **Although the Paris climate agreement and the SDGs were born of separate political processes in 2015, she says, the two agendas are in fact “one and the same.”**”

- Link: [IISD - SDG Summit Reaffirms Shared Commitment to Turn the World to 2030](#)

UN News –African leaders take bold stand for sustainable development at UN Assembly

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141162>

“**Addressing the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, leaders from African nations voiced their commitment to achieving sustainable development** and called for a more equitable and prosperous world. **They expressed unwavering support for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, emphasizing that the current trajectory falls short of ambitions, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.....”

Nature (Editorial) - Rich countries must align science funding with the SDGs

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02967-x>

On the related “Science summit”. **“Research in poorer countries maps closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals — wealthy nations must follow if the goals are to be met.”**

“**A [Science Summit](#) is being held at the United Nations, to coincide with the UN General Assembly. The summit’s overall theme revolves around the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to end poverty and protect the environment. Science is explicitly recognized in two of the goals: international partnerships are a theme of SDG 17; and SDG 9 includes targets to increase spending on research and development as well as expand the number of researchers. But for the world to truly benefit, science-funding agencies in high-income countries need to place a much stronger emphasis on the SDGs for projects they fund.** Low-income countries spend about 0.5% of their gross domestic product on science, whereas high-income countries spend around 3%. But research in low-income countries is much more likely to be aligned with the goals: 60–80% of these nations’ scientific publications have some connection to the SDGs, compared with 30–40% in upper-middle and high-income ones...”

IDS - How can we get the SDGs back on track?

M Leach; <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/how-can-we-get-the-sdgs-back-on-track/>

“The current situation highlights **three, linked paradoxes**: 1. Universality vs. global political-economic division. 2. Inclusion vs. intersecting inequalities. 3. Structures vs. uncertainties....”

IDS disagrees with the ones arguing for a return to a simpler, narrower, less ambitious agenda. “One that might focus on just a few goals and targets – back to the siloes, to prioritise? No. “

Instead, “... in line with the [recasting development agenda](#) we’ve been discussing at IDS, and with the debates we’ve been having in the International Science Council as presented in a [report to the High-level Political Forum in July](#), **it is vital to recapture integration not fragmentation. An urgent shift is needed, for a new approach to development that recaptures the transformative, systemic approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.** An approach that recognises the interdependencies of the SDGs and other global policy frameworks and is supported by coherent roadmaps, narratives and actions. These could usefully draw on the classification of the **six SDG transformations articulated in numerous scientific assessments**, such as the The World in 2050 (2018, 2019, 2020) and the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR, 2019):

- (1) Human capacity, well-being and health.
- (2) Consumption and production toward sustainable and just economies.
- (3) Decarbonization and universal energy access.
- (4) Food and nutrition, biosphere and water.
- (5) Urban and peri-urban areas and mobility.
- (6) Global environmental and human commons including the digital revolution, and explore the potential to consolidate composite targets and indicators....”

Climate Ambition summit (Wednesday, 20 Sept)

UN News - 'Humanity has opened the gates to hell' warns Guterres as climate coalition demands action

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141082>

"... The **UN chief is calling for a Climate Solidarity Pact** that will hold major emitters more to account, and calling on wealthy countries to support emerging economies so they can weather the crisis. **The [Acceleration Agenda](#)** calls on governments "to hit fast forward", he added.

HPW - UN Chief Excludes World's Top Polluters from Climate Summit

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/un-chief-excludes-worlds-top-polluters-from-climate-summit/>

"The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, explicitly excluded the world's five largest emitters of greenhouse gases – China, the United States, Russia, India and Japan – from his Climate Ambition Summit, held Wednesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. ...By excluding the world's largest emitters, Guterres sent a clear message to their leaders: you are not taking the climate threat seriously."

"...In the months leading up to the summit, Secretary-General António Guterres made clear that only countries that had taken significant steps to address climate change would be invited. Invited countries were also required to send a high-level leader to the summit. Several **G20 countries made the final cut, including Brazil, Canada, South Africa, and nine European Union countries**, among them Germany, France, and Spain."

PS: **"...Guterres's message to the world's largest polluters at the Climate Ambition Summit was further undermined by the fact that most of the key leaders he barred from the summit — Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi — chose not to attend the UN General Assembly in the first place."**

PS: **"...The heads-of-state of 17 countries, including Kenya, Colombia, a group of small island states, and EU countries such as France, Belgium, Denmark, and Spain, published a letter ahead of the Climate Ambition Summit calling for a global phase-out of fossil fuels. The statement by the 17 countries explicitly denounced the idea that carbon capture technologies can be a solution to the climate crisis.....The statement by the 17 countries directly contradicted the position of the United Arab Emirates, host of this year's upcoming UN Climate Conference COP28, which aims to focus on reducing emissions rather than phasing out fossil fuels..."**

Devex - Donors raiding development aid to pay for climate, report warns

<https://www.devex.com/news/donors-raiding-development-aid-to-pay-for-climate-report-warns-106225>

"High-income countries are far behind on their international climate finance obligations, but that hasn't stopped them from taking money from development aid budgets, according to a new

analysis launched ahead of the United Nations General Assembly taking place in New York this week....”

“A failure of high-income countries to deliver on a 2009 promise to mobilize \$100 billion a year in climate finance — on top of aid — to lower-income countries vulnerable to the effects of global warming has long soured climate negotiations, causing mistrust and impeding progress in climate talks. While that target is expected to be met this year, **the focus of many climate experts is already moving to the post-\$100 billion target, known as the New Collective Quantified Goal, or NCQG, due in 2025 and is expected to run into the trillions.** However, **two recent reports have added to extensive concerns about existing climate finance, including its overlap with traditional official development assistance.**”

“A [report](#) by international NGO [CARE](#) released this month has found that 93% of the climate finance reported by high-income countries between 2011 and 2020 was taken directly from development aid budgets, which CARE placed at 0.7% of gross domestic product though that amount has been inconsistent across donor countries despite their support for it. **Another scathing report by the think tank [Overseas Development Institute](#) found many high-income countries have failed to meet their climate finance targets for 11 years in a row,** with the United States, Spain, and Australia the biggest laggards. According to ODI, just eight of 23 high-income countries have paid their fair share.”

PS: “The ODI [report](#) stressed the importance of funding for climate adaptation, a broad category that refers to preparing countries to adjust to the effects of global warming. Despite its importance — and a donor commitment to double funding for it [made at the U.N. climate summit, or COP 26,](#) in 2021 — **climate adaptation financing still lags way behind climate mitigation funding,** which is aimed at reducing carbon emissions and, unlike adaptation projects, usually provides a clear return on investment.....”

Financing for development High-Level dialogue

Eurodad - A UN Convention on Tax – momentum just keeps growing

https://www.eurodad.org/a-un-convention-on-tax-momentum-just-keeps-growing?utm_campaign=newsletter_21_09_2023&utm_medium=email&utm_source=eurodad

“Eurodad's Tax Justice Coordinator Tove Maria Ryding analyses what this week in New York has meant for a UN Convention on Tax and what is in store in the coming months.”

“As heads of state and high-level ministers from around the world gathered for the UN General Assembly in New York this week, **international tax cooperation was on the agenda as part of a High-level dialogue on Financing for Development.....**”

Other UNGA78 related news snippets

There's just too many events & side -events, so below just coverage on a few of these.

UNITAID - Presidents of Brazil and France call for increased support to Unitaid to speed up access to lifesaving health products

<https://unitaid.org/news-blog/presidents-of-brazil-and-france-call-for-increased-support-to-unitaid-to-speed-up-access-to-lifesaving-health-products/#en>

“Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and French President Emmanuel Macron, leaders of two co-founding countries of Unitaid, call for faster access to lifesaving health products in low- and middle-income countries and applaud new funding for Unitaid. The **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation doubles its support to Unitaid to US\$100 million over the next five years.**”

PMNCH - UNGA78 side event: Renewing the Promise for Women, Children and Adolescents

<https://pmnch.who.int/news-and-events/news/item/20-09-2023-unga78-side-event-renewing-the-promise-for-women-children-and-adolescents>

“Governments must now “radically reimagine global health,” putting women, children and adolescents at the centre of efforts or else risk rollbacks across multiple development gains. That was the overarching message of *Renewing the Promise for Women, Children and Adolescents*, a high-level event convened by **President Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa** and held on the sidelines of the United Nations’ General Assembly (UNGA) on 18 September 2023.....”

PMNCH - UNGA78 side event: 1.8 Billion Futures: How to Secure the Long-term Health and Well-Being of Adolescents and Young People Worldwide

[PMNCH](#)

“The long-term health and well-being of adolescents globally can only be achieved if governments and organizations start seeing young people for the unique population they are and addressing their needs accordingly. That means investing in youth-specific interventions but also supporting solutions created by young people themselves, experts, on the sidelines of the United Nations’ General Assembly on 18 September 2022, told a packed room. In New York City, **the Clinton Global Initiative together with Fondation Botnar, convened a variety of leaders, advocates, and youth for 1.8 Billion Futures: How to Secure the Long-term Health and Well-Being of Adolescents and Young People Worldwide.....**”

Gates Foundation Honors 2023 Goalkeepers Awardees, Announces Commitments to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals

<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2023/09/goalkeepers-awards-unfpa-unitaid>

Re the Goalkeepers Awards evening on Sept 19. “**Awardees include Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Rosalynn and Jimmy Carter, Bono, and activists from Cameroon, Ethiopia, and the United States.**”

“At its annual Goalkeepers events, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced this year’s Goalkeepers Global Goals Award winners, recognizing the **contributions of six remarkable leaders working in their communities and around the world to advance progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).....”**

“Earlier this week, the foundation responded to an alarming reversal in progress on [Global Goal 3](#) by **announcing commitments totaling \$200 million to help achieve universal access to family planning products and information, faster delivery of lifesaving health solutions,** and a reduction in maternal and child mortality.....” (see bottom of the website page for more detail on these)

- See also AP - [Gates Foundation commits \\$200 million to pay for medical supplies and contraception](#)

Via Devex - The ‘love budget’

<https://www.devex.com/news/devex-newswire-show-them-the-money-says-roxy-stewart-106243>

“During an event on pandemic prevention hosted by the Pandemic Action Network, former Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos urged world leaders to **take bold, even unpopular, actions.** He recalled that during negotiations to create the World Trade Organization decades ago, a delegate from Africa said “please don’t put money over life.” “I remember that phrase,” said Nobel Prize winner Santos. “And this is what happened right in the pandemic, when we started discussing about giving licenses to countries to produce the vaccine.” But **world leaders can show their “love through the budget,”** he said, arguing that if **countries really want to be prepared for the next pandemic, they should translate words into budgets.....”**

And: “....• Apparently the U.S. missed its chance to speak at the plenary for the high-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response — along with others like China, Canada, and India — due to time constraints. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was supposed to deliver the U.S. statement....”

UK government - UK announces “transformational” support to boost global health at UNGA

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-announces-transformational-support-to-boost-global-health-at-unga>

“New UK government funding will help tackle future pandemics, boost research into vaccines and reduce deaths from infectious diseases and end preventable deaths of mothers, new-borns and children.”

“This includes up to £103.5 million for developing affordable new vaccines through the UK Vaccine Network and other health products and treatments which will halt the spread of infectious diseases, as well as programmes to protect women’s sexual and reproductive health and ultimately reduce preventable deaths. The UK is also supporting research and development into cutting-edge technology to respond quickly to disease outbreaks and improve the health of mothers, babies and children in low- and middle-income countries. Among other things this funding of £295 million will help develop new methods of administering drugs to help ensure life-saving care can reach the most remote-areas. **A further £95 million will be allocated to the Tackling**

Deadly Diseases in Africa Programme II, which partners with Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, World Health Organization and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to help detect and tackle future epidemics, drug resistant infections and climate change....”

UNAIDS - The path that ends AIDS by 2030 will boost progress towards achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals

https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2023/september/20230920_unaids-hiv-progress

“UNAIDS, the Governments of Botswana and the United States of America, together with the European Commission have joined global partners to urge world leaders to get on the path that ends AIDS. This, they say, will also accelerate progress to reach many other of the Sustainable Development Goals. The call was made at a high-level event, **Celebrating Global HIV Progress to End AIDS and Advance the Sustainable Development Goals**, held during the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York. Participants underscored the life-saving impact of the global HIV response as well as the need for continued support, funding and commitment, including for the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).....”

- And via **the O’Neill institute**:

“In their role as a UNAIDS Collaborating Center, the O’Neill Institute’s [Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative](#) co-organized a **roundtable for the new Global Council on Inequality, AIDS, and Pandemics**, [“Think Pandemics-Think Inequalities.”](#) The event highlighted [new co-authored research in BMJ](#) showing the link between income inequality and the growth of pandemics. “

- Via **ONE’s Aftershocks newsletter**:

“**African currencies lost 8% of their value between January 2022 and March 2023. That’s effectively making their debt and imports more costly.** It’s an often unrecognised effect of **rapidly increasing interest rates**. That’s because most debt – including 80% of loans in low- and middle-income countries – is based in US dollars. The US dollar has strengthened considerably in recent years, thanks to rising US interest rates. **Since the start of the pandemic, currency depreciation across sub-Saharan Africa has increased the cost of debt by 10% of GDP. Around 3.3 billion people – nearly half of humanity – now live in countries that spend more on debt interest payments than on health or education.**”

“**The world’s richest countries stalled progress on a UN-proposed US\$500 billion financing plan for the SDGs.** Their **justification**: a belief that global efforts to unlock finance for sustainable development are better led by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the G7, and the G20. US President Joe Biden used his UN General Assembly speech to call for major reforms of the international finance system that would benefit lower-income countries. But while these reforms are underway, the **G20 proposal for an additional \$20 billion a year in new finance** is roughly 2% of the \$1 trillion a year that experts say is needed. **This is not what campaigners had in mind when they called for a 2% (of global GDP!) Plan for People and Planet.** Fortunately, another major international moment for leaders to announce progress is right around the corner: **the upcoming Annual World Bank-IMF Meetings in October.**”

AMR

CGD (blog) - Six Recommendations to Improve the Market for Antimicrobials

A McDonnell et al ; <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/six-recommendations-improve-market-antimicrobials>

Blog related to a **new CGD report** (see below).

“...The politics of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has changed substantially since we launched the [first CGD working group on AMR](#) in 2007. Building on its previous research and analysis on AMR, in 2022, CGD launched the working group *A New Grand Bargain to Improve the Antimicrobial Market for Human Health* to examine policy options to drive global action against AMR.....” In the **working group’s final report**, “**we outline the principles of a Grand Bargain that we believe all stakeholders can and should sign up to during the UN General Assembly’s High-Level Meeting on AMR in 2024.....**”.

The report proposes **six key recommendations to improve the antimicrobial market for human health**. “This report [will be] formally launched in collaboration with the Nigerian and UK governments on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, today. “

- The CGD Report - [A New Grand Bargain to Improve the Antimicrobial Market for Human Health: Final Report of the Center for Global Development’s Working Group](#) (by A McDonnell et al)

“This report presents recommendations on increasing the availability of critically needed drugs, creating incentives to develop new ones, and reducing market pressures to misuse or oversell the drugs. It provides one **political** and five **operational** recommendations. The **political recommendation** outlines why it is both possible and in everyone’s interest to overcome the collective action problems inherent in dealing with market failures in the antimicrobial market through a global agreement. The **five operational recommendations** describe actions countries could take to begin to implement such a deal...”

Do check out what this new Grand Bargain entails.

Pandemic Accord Negotiations (INB, Geneva)

Euractiv - Looming deadline puts pressure on slow pandemic treaty negotiations

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/coronavirus/news/looming-deadline-puts-pressure-on-slow-pandemic-treaty-negotiations/>

“**Controversial topics, little time and closed doors – talks are moving slowly and significant disagreements are yet to be negotiated** among the World Health Organisation (WHO) members on a Pandemic Accord.” “Given the complex and delicate topics on the table, doubts persist as to

whether the 194 WHO member states will be able to agree on a pandemic treaty with any significant impact. At the same time, their **deadline for an agreement on 24 May 2024 at the World Health Assembly (WHA) is extremely tight....**”

“...On 16 October, the Bureau will share a proposal for a negotiating text, which will be considered at the INB’s 7th meeting on 6-10 November and 4-6 December. [According to Third World Network](#), members wanted to review the text before even accepting it as a negotiating text....”

And a quote: “...**Benefit sharing** is mentioned several times in the Bureau text. **One option proposed is that manufacturers of pandemic-related products developed from shared pathogens would have to give the WHO access to 20% of the production.** Some of this would then be donated and some sold at “affordable prices” to developing countries. **Mohga Kamal-Yanni**, senior global health policy advisor at the People’s Vaccine Alliance, told Euractiv, that this option has been a part of talks already. “**So basically 20% of the supply would go to 80% of the world population, and 80% of the supply would go to 20% of the population. That’s called equity. I mean, it’s just crazy,**” she said, adding that any compromise should be in favour of developing countries....”

Global Health Governance

Lancet Editorial - Protecting the integrity of WHO's regional offices

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02026-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02026-3/fulltext)

“... **Next month, elections will take place for WHO Regional Directors in the Western Pacific, South-East Asia, and Eastern Mediterranean regions—three of six WHO regional offices.** These elections occur every 5 years and candidates are nominated by regional member states, with each region autonomously managing its own election process. **Concerns have been raised regarding the opacity of the candidate selection processes and the resulting suitability of some nominees.** These concerns threaten to delegitimise both the election process and the future credibility of elected WHO Regional Directors. **A World Report in this week’s issue of The Lancet highlights criticism over apparent nepotism in the nomination of candidates for election in the South-East Asia region—**one candidate is the daughter of the nominating country’s Prime Minister. Such examples damage trust in the integrity of WHO’s leaders. Some regions have made changes in an effort to increase transparency and trust. The Western Pacific region, for example, has introduced a live public forum, in which candidates can present their manifestos. **Selection of unsuitable candidates has serious consequences for the management of WHO’s regional offices. ...**”

The editorial concludes: “**It is time to take elections for WHO’s Regional Directors more seriously.**”

- Related Lancet World Report: [Criticism over WHO Regional Director nominee](#)

“Bangladesh’s nomination of Saima Wazed as Regional Director of South-East Asia has raised questions over transparency and nepotism. Talha Burki reports.

Guardian - War in Ukraine is revealing a new global order – and the ‘power south’ is the winner

N Tocci; https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/sep/20/war-ukraine-new-global-order-power-south-india-china?CMP=share_btn_tw

“Long-held resentments of the west are surfacing as world relations rebalance in favour of economic powerhouses like India and China.”

“... **The term “global south” is suddenly cropping up at almost every gathering in the west. But it is also increasingly used in the south too.** Loosely, it includes what used to be called developing countries, and many formerly colonised nations. It includes economic powerhouses such as China and India, mid-sized powers such as Turkey, Brazil and Saudi Arabia, and poor countries that struggle to make their voices heard. The group is so heterogeneous that it begs the question of whether it makes sense to consider it as such at all. Yet these countries share a sense that their independent voices should be heard rather than being shaped or determined by the west....”

“... **The west pays greater heed than it used to also because the global south matters more in international relations.** As the Indian scholar Amitav Acharya points out, **there is a distinction between the “power south”, which represents the engine of global growth, and the “poor south”.** The crucial question is how to ensure that the latter also has a voice. ...”

“... Countries in the “power south” are carving out a role in the world through diplomacy, transactional relationships and “multi-alignment” in different organisations.”

TGH - There Is No Universal Health Care Without Universal Peace

B Armocida et al;

<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/there-no-universal-health-care-without-universal-peace>

Very important message for our times on “**The symbiosis of peace and public health**”.

“At its core, **peace is a fundamental determinant of public health.** Despite local and international efforts to reduce the morbidity and mortality of populations through innovation, improved health legislation, and expanded coverage or access to care, **the global health community — now more than ever — needs to treat peace as essential.** “

“... Only seven years remain to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Preventing further conflicts and wars is thus of utmost importance. **Now more than ever is the need essential for accountability – including that of global health actors – to promote peace.** The global health sector should advocate for violence mitigation and prevention and foster inclusive civil dialogue. **Peace is and should be treated as a global health priority.** “

Access to medicines & health technologies

Reuters - Exclusive: India to mandate annual audit of pharma suppliers by drugmakers

[Reuters](#);

“ India will make it mandatory for drugmakers to audit their raw material suppliers at least once a year, according to a government document, tightening rules after India-made cough syrups were linked to 141 children's deaths worldwide. The **new mandate, along with additional testing rules for cough syrup exports implemented in June, shows that India is seeking to reassure buyers about the safety of its \$42 billion pharmaceuticals industry.....**” “....India's federal drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), conveyed the decision on mandatory audits for raw material and packaging material suppliers in a meeting with industry representatives on Sept. 15, according to a presentation seen by Reuters.”

MPP - Afrigen presents Advances in mRNA Vaccine Technology for Global Health

<https://medicinespatentpool.org/news-publications-post/afrigen-presents-advances-in-mrna-vaccine-technology-for-global-health>

“In its second **scientific colloquium**, Afrigen and the mRNA technology transfer programme are excited to share significant progress in the realm of mRNA vaccine technology, marking a transformative leap toward global health security. The science outlined in the mRNA Science Colloquium underscores the progress made at Afrigen since the start of the project and looks ahead to the next steps....”

UN High-Level Meetings must prioritize medical oxygen to save lives, say world's leading agencies

<https://www.paho.org/en/news/14-9-2023-high-level-meetings-must-prioritize-medical-oxygen-save-lives-say-worlds-leading>

This was some important advocacy ahead of the UN HL meetings.

“In advance of the three UN High-Level Meetings on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, Universal Health Coverage, and Tuberculosis 20-22 September 2023, **about 20 of the world's leading agencies call on world leaders to prioritize access to medical oxygen in health strategies, policies, and financing.**”

“The **Global Oxygen Alliance (GO2AL)** was launched in May 2023 with Unitaid and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as co-chairs, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) as vice-chairs, and Unitaid, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF sharing the secretariat. **GO2AL is calling for world leaders to ensure the 2023 World Health Assembly Resolution on Increasing Access to Medical Oxygen, adopted by all 194 WHO Member States, is reflected in the universal health coverage, pandemic preparedness, prevention and response, and tuberculosis agendas.....**”

Guardian - South Africa launches 'unprecedented' investigation of Johnson & Johnson over TB drug prices

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/sep/22/south-africa-launches-unprecedented-investigation-of-johnson-johnson-over-tb-drug-prices>

"Competition watchdog probes claims of profiteering by US drugmaker in country where tuberculosis is biggest killer."

Global Public Health - Can we move beyond vaccine apartheid? Examining the determinants of the COVID-19 vaccine gap

Lisa Forman et al; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2023.2256822>

"While global health leaders call disparities in access to COVID-19 vaccines an 'apartheid,' this gap is not the first such disparity. The recurrence of these gaps in low and middle-income countries and especially in Africa, raises questions about their determinants and about the persistent failures of global health institutions to remediate them. We interrogate these determinants and questions by examining: (1) the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines; (2) primary determinants of vaccine access including availability and affordability; (3) factors affecting availability (hoarding, COVAX, and manufacturing capacity); and (4) factors affecting affordability (pricing, intellectual property rights (IPR), the TRIPS waiver and a potential pandemic treaty). **We conclude that IPR constrained the affordability and availability of COVID-19 vaccines in ways inadequately addressed by COVAX and a waiver compromise thwarted by political, corporate, and philanthropic interests.** While stronger limits to IPR in a pandemic treaty and a reformed International Health Regulations will not resolve structural inequities, they could meaningfully expand LMIC autonomy to protect public health. **We urge equity-seeking Global South and North actors to fight for such IPR reforms as small and meaningful steps towards a more equitable global health order.**"

- And via The O'Neill institute:

"On the sidelines of the HLMs, the [Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative](#) convened civil society and scientific leaders for the **growing diagnostics equity consortium** to address an oft-neglected throughline for the three HLMs. "

Global health governance & Governance of Health

Global Development Governance 2.0: Fractured accountabilities in a divided governance complex

S Haug et al; <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1758-5899.13261>

"The proliferation of state and non-state actors, along with increasing institutional complexity, has led to a qualitative shift in Global Development Governance (GDG) towards what we term 'GDG 2.0'. Realising accountability in this context presents challenges due to growing actor diversity, institutional plurality and a lack of formalised accountability structures. Building on the introduction

to this special section, **we explore the potential of ‘forward-looking’ approaches to accountability**, notably collective deliberation, learning and competition. Despite the importance of these mechanisms for GDG processes, conceptualising them as accountability tools may have limited gains and indeed reinforce the preferences of established actors, dilute useful monitoring approaches and divert attention from longstanding agendas. **We argue that prioritising enabling environments for more circumscribed ‘backward-looking’ accountability**—with a focus on standard-setting and monitoring—**may be more feasible and effective towards holding decision-makers to account within the GDG 2.0 context.”**

Global Health Action - Insights from the COVID-19 pandemic: trends in development assistance committee countries’ aid allocation, 2011–2021

S Nomura et al ; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16549716.2023.2258707>

“The study found an increasing trend in the total ODA provided by DAC member countries from 2011 to 2021. However, the average ODA/GNI ratio showed a slight but significant decrease before the pandemic, followed by an increase after the COVID-19 pandemic. The health sector received the highest percentage of aid after the pandemic, with a marked increase in both bilateral and multilateral aid. However, other sectors such as humanitarian aid, water and sanitation, and energy experienced a significant decrease in sectoral aid share.”

Global health financing

KFF - PEPFAR Reauthorization and Abortion

K Moss et al; [KFF](#);

“In this [new analysis](#), KFF provides an overview of the current debate and answers key questions about the role of the abortion debate in PEPFAR’s reauthorization, including:

- What concerns about abortion have been raised?
- What has been the response by PEPFAR and the U.S. government?
- What U.S. government laws and policies regarding abortion apply to PEPFAR?
- What are the implications if PEPFAR is not authorized?....”

UHC & PHC

Alliance for HPSR - How health policy and systems research can advance universal health coverage

<https://ahpsr.who.int/publications/i/item/how-health-policy-and-systems-research-can-advance-universal-health-coverage>

Advocacy brief. “The pursuit of universal health coverage (UHC) remains a pressing priority for every country. Achieving UHC requires research and learning to understand how health systems are organized, funded and implemented. This type of research informing policy and practice is known as health policy and systems research, and it focuses on understanding the complex relationships and interactions to strengthen health systems and improve health outcomes. “

Lancet Letter - Surgery's place in the UHC2030 Action Agenda

K Winslow et al; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01890-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01890-1/fulltext)

“Safe, timely, and affordable surgical care is an indivisible component of UHC, and achieving UHC underlies the surgical community's core priorities....”

“... **The UNGA-78 high-level meetings present opportune moments to highlight the importance of surgical care in UHC** and call for cross-sectoral and intersectoral action. By strengthening the surgical workforce, implementing national surgical policies, and investing in surgical care, the global health community can make substantial strides towards achieving UHC and the broader goal of equitable and resilient health systems worldwide.”

Pandemic preparedness & response/ Global Health Security

Plos GPH _ Global public health intelligence: World Health Organization operational practices

Esther Hamblion et al (World Health Organization Public Health Intelligence teams); <https://journals.plos.org/globalpublichealth/article?id=10.1371/journal.pgph.0002359>

“Early warning and response are key to tackle emerging and acute public health risks globally. Therefore, **the World Health Organization (WHO) has implemented a robust approach to public health intelligence (PHI) for the global detection, verification and risk assessment of acute public health threats.** WHO’s PHI operations are underpinned by the International Health Regulations (2005), which require that countries strengthen surveillance efforts, and assess, notify and verify events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). **PHI activities at WHO are conducted systematically at WHO’s headquarters and all six regional offices continuously, throughout every day of the year. We describe four interlinked steps; detection, verification, risk assessment, and reporting and dissemination.** For PHI operations, a diverse and interdisciplinary workforce is needed. Overall, PHI is a key feature of the global health architecture and will only become more prominent as the world faces increasing public health threats.”

Nature Medicine – The CEPI centralized laboratory network for COVID-19 will help prepare for future outbreaks

A Azizi et al ; <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-023-02534-x>

“In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) established a Centralized Laboratory Network (CLN)** of ten laboratories in order to standardize immunological assays, provide testing support to vaccine developers, identify the immune correlates of protection for vaccines, and facilitate approval and dissemination of the most effective vaccine candidates. The establishment of the CLN also assisted in capacity-building initiatives and technology-transfer programs....”

State of affairs on this CEPI CLN.

Nature - Furry little creatures teem with a multitude of viruses

https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02917-7?utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=nature&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1695225803

“Large-scale survey reveals the **diversity of viruses in small mammals**, which can be sources of viruses that hop to humans.” “Bats, rodents and shrews — the most important animal sources of human infectious diseases — harbour a veritable smorgasbord of viruses....”

Planetary health

Plos Climate - Climate change and the problem of social cost

William K. Jaeger; <https://journals.plos.org/climate/article?id=10.1371/journal.pclm.0000287>

Review. “**This paper assesses the prospects for climate stabilization from both positive and normative economic perspectives, and with an eye to the conditions necessary for collective action across the three domains: domestic, international, and intergenerational.** While it is well-established that international freeriding and transaction costs pose major impediments to successful environmental agreements, **this analysis identifies the intergenerational domain as the source of intractability due to long delays between bearing the mitigation costs and enjoying their eventual climate benefits.** This lag causes the **net benefits for median-aged voters’ to be negative over their expected remaining lifespans.** Drawing from several Integrated Assessment Models of the benefits and costs of climate stabilization actions, the analysis concludes that programs of domestic and international climate actions will be hopelessly stymied by the failure of the actions to pass individual and collective rationality tests. However, these dire findings leave the door open to the possibility that some other change in circumstances might undercut this conclusion. In particular, the **assignment of rights** has that potential.”

Covid

Economist - The pandemic’s true death toll

<https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/coronavirus-excess-deaths-estimates>

As of 20 Sept. “Our daily estimate of excess deaths around the world.”

“Although the **official number of deaths caused by covid-19 is now 7m**, our single best estimate is that the **actual toll is 26.1m people**. We find that there is a 95% chance that the true value lies between 17.9m and 31.6m additional deaths.....”

Stat - Does the risk of getting long Covid increase each time you get reinfected?

<https://www.statnews.com/2023/09/20/do-long-covid-odds-increase-with-second-infection/>

“Ziyad Al-Aly, chief of research at the VA St. Louis Healthcare System and clinical epidemiologist at Washington University in St. Louis, talked with STAT about what we understand about long Covid so far, and what scientists are still trying to figure out.”

And via **Cidrap News** – [Both Paxlovid, molnupiravir lower COVID Omicron deaths, hospitalizations, studies conclude](#)

“Paxlovid may have slight advantage against death, according to one study.”

Infectious diseases & NTDs

Nature - Nipah virus outbreak: what scientists know so far

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02967-x>

“India is taking urgent steps to halt the transmission of a rare but deadly virus that spreads from bats to humans.”

Telegraph - ‘My world looks like a TV with no signal after infection stole my sight’

[Telegraph](#);

“A ‘dream come true’ drug is on the brink of a national rollout in the Philippines, and could transform life for thousands with resistant TB.”

“...In 2021, the Philippines was among the first countries to adopt a “revolutionary” new treatment for multidrug resistant TB, known as BPaL, in a pilot programme. And next month, it is set to be introduced in hospitals across the vast archipelago.”

Mental health & psycho-social wellbeing

The Conversation - Suicide in Ghana: society expects men to be providers – new study explores this pressure

J Andoh-Arthur; <https://theconversation.com/suicide-in-ghana-society-expects-men-to-be-providers-new-study-explores-this-pressure-213412>

Related study: [“Paradoxes of Interdependence and Dependence”: A qualitative study of economic difficulties and relational encounters prior to men’s suicide in Ghana](#)

Social & commercial determinants of health

Health Promotion International (Editorial) - Global public health action is needed to counter the commercial gambling industry

<https://academic.oup.com/heapro/article/38/5/daad110/7280079?login=false>

By S Thomas et al.

Sexual & Reproductive health rights

CFR – Abortion Law: Global Comparisons

<https://www.cfr.org/article/abortion-law-global-comparisons>

“The U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, which guaranteed the constitutional right to abortion for almost fifty years. **How does regulation of abortion in the United States compare to that in the rest of the world?**”

Access to medicines & health technology

Economist - Big pharma can’t get enough of one class of cancer drugs

<https://www.economist.com/business/2023/09/21/big-pharma-cant-get-enough-of-one-class-of-cancer-drugs>

“A spate of dealmaking suggests high expectations for **antibody-drug conjugates**.”

“... **adcs**. Makers of these **antibody-drug conjugates**, to give them their full name, are all the rage among the world’s biggest drugmakers. Pfizer is paying \$43bn for Seagen, which in turn has just teamed up with Nurix Therapeutics, a smaller biotechnology firm, to work on this class of drugs. Amgen, AstraZeneca and Merck have also placed billion-dollar bets on adcs...”

Human resources for health

NYT - 'Only God Can Thank You': Female Health Workers Fight to Be Paid

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/health/community-health-worker-pay.html?smtyp=cur&smid=tw-nythealth>

“Community health workers put in long hours to protect people in developing countries from diseases such as malaria, Covid-19 and H.I.V. But most are compensated minimally, or not paid at all.”

Lancet Letter - Redefining nursing: advancing health equity post-pandemic

Y Tony Yang et al ; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)01417-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)01417-4/fulltext)

“The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the invaluable role of nurses, unearthing systemic failures, and emphasising the potential for a health equity-focused transformation. Health disparities, especially racial disparities, highlighted by the pandemic, obligate nurses to advocate for social justice as part of their professional ethics and to scrutinise institutional and structural racism in nursing practices There is a crucial need to recognise and reward nursing contributions to improving health outcomes, rather than treating them as costs. The nursing profession's lack of gender and racial and ethnic diversity, however, limits its ability to enhance community health and health equity. It is crucial to recruit and support a diverse workforce mirroring the demographic our nurses serve. The full potential of nursing is often restricted by professional and legal hierarchies, curtailing nurse practice authority. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a pressing need to oppose any regressive efforts to reverse advancements in nursing authority and strive for parity with physicians in terms of practice and compensation. Hospitals also play a considerable role in expediting health equity improvements with nursing. Hospitals should weave health equity into their core functions, boost nursing leadership, and respect and empower their workforce. Strengthening nursing capacity and expertise is key to achieving health equity....”

Miscellaneous

WHO - Operations at WHO's logistics hub in Dubai reach an unprecedented scale and impact, says new report

“WHO has released an innovative, interactive report that provides insights into the vast operations and global impact of WHO's logistics hub in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The new report reveals the

logistics hub's impressive ability to provide support on an unprecedented scale, and its swift, adaptable response to humanitarian crises. This reinforces its vital role in WHO emergency response efforts across the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and beyond. ...”

[Report on WHO's logistics hub in Dubai](#)

Lancet - Uganda's anti-homosexuality laws stymie research

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(23\)02028-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(23)02028-7/fulltext)

“Researchers report that study participants are dropping out and scientists are likely to avoid studying LGBTQ communities in Uganda. John Agaba reports from Kampala.”

Science - How much stuff does it take to not be poor? About 6 tons per year

<https://www.science.org/content/article/how-much-stuff-does-it-take-not-be-poor-about-6-tons-year>

“That’s the average amount of food, fuel, clothing, and other supplies per person, researchers calculate in first-of-its-kind study.”

“How much stuff do people need to lead a decent life? It’s a hard, and subjective, question. But researchers have now estimated for the first time what it takes, quantitatively speaking, to [keep one person out of abject poverty](#): about 6 tons per year of food, fuel, clothing, and other supplies, researchers report this month in *Environmental Science & Technology*.”

“...To make the new estimates, environmental scientists Johan Andrés Vélez-Henao and Stefan Pauliuk of the University of Freiburg and colleagues turned to a [common definition of basic living standards](#) created in 2017. The list includes 15 square meters of living space, 2100 calories of food per day for adults, basic appliances such as a washing machine and a modern stove, a phone and laptop, and the means to travel to work or sell their wares. The researchers calculated the rough amount of raw materials involved in each of these objects and services. From a societal perspective, they looked at two kinds of needs for materials, because they have different implications. The first is very large and essentially one-time investments, such as buying a house. The other is analogous to the ongoing maintenance costs to prevent it from falling into ruin....”

“... PS: One key takeaway, Vélez-Henao and Pauliuk say, is that this new estimate is achievable without ruining the planet. The duo notes that the average ongoing amount of stuff is within the range—between 8 and 14 tons per year—of what previous studies have suggested would be sustainable. Here's the catch: These studies assume that every person on the planet eventually consumes roughly the same amount of raw materials.And [rich countries already use a lot of raw materials](#). Take the United States and Germany, for example. To maintain their lifestyles, people in these countries require more than 70 tons of raw materials every year per capita—a much bigger share than the 8 to 14 tons per capita for everyone on the planet to have just and sustainable living standards. “This shows you that inequality reduction is so critical” for achieving the U.N.’s Sustainable Development Goals, says Narasimha Rao, an expert in energy and poverty at Yale University....”

Papers & reports

Lancet Comment - Towards the dream of universal social protection: lessons from Pakistan's Ehsaas

S Nishtar et al; [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(23\)00354-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(23)00354-6/fulltext)

In case you missed this. Part of the new – October – issue of the Lancet GH.

“40–60% of Pakistanis live in poverty. **During our time in government (from August, 2018, to April, 2022), we began a journey towards establishing a welfare state through the Ehsaas initiative, which comprised 16 nationwide programmes—including cash transfer initiatives, care services, poverty graduation, and targeted subsidy programmes....**”

Also with many (implementation) lessons for other LMICs.

Annals of Global Health - Interdependent Determinants of Health and Death? Examining the Linkages between Health Equity, Human Rights, and Democracy during COVID-19

<https://annalsofglobalhealth.org/articles/10.5334/aogh.4104>

By L Forman et al.

Blogs & op-eds

Tweets

Anthony Costello

“More than one million people are estimated to have died as a result of vaccine hoarding. **72% remain unvaccinated in low income countries where mortality rates were double.** A global disgrace.”

Matthew Kavanagh

“**“100 day mission” for pandemic vax/drug is a honestly a sickly ironic framing without a serious commitment to tech transfer.** Sitting in UN Hall while Northern govts and orgs tout it, while ignoring that none of the Southerners are... illustration of broken health governance.”

Katri Bertram (on the UN HL meeting on UHC)

“**But overall**, sorry to be blunt (& publicly say what others aren't able to) (as I tune out for the night, so perhaps I'll have to revise this tomorrow): **The PD will definitely *not* catalyze change/progress**
We took stock, looked back & not a single new commitment was made.”

Podcasts & webinars

Global Health Matters – Risking lives to save lives: health workers in conflict zones

<https://tdr.who.int/global-health-matters-podcast/risking-lives-to-save-lives-health-workers-in-conflict-zones>

“The **Safeguarding Health in Conflict coalition** recently published a report that documented 232 health workers killed, more than 700 incidents where health facilities were damaged and almost 300 health personnel kidnapped in 2022. **This episode dives into the circumstances and risks health workers face in conflict settings.** Host Garry Aslanyan speaks to a **health worker who has been on the frontline of recent conflict in Sudan.** Their testimony is discussed with Susannah Sirkin, former Director of Policy at Physicians for Human Rights, and Samer Jabbour, a cardiologist who has worked in the area of conflict in health since war broke out in his home country of Syria.”