

IHP news 884: AI summary & key reads - From 'Health for All' to 'Scary for All'

The **International Health Policies (IHP) newsletter issue 884** opens with a stark reflection by Kristof Decoster on the shift from the hopeful "Health for All" era to a contemporary reality described as "**Scary for All**". This dystopian atmosphere is fueled by converging crises in **climate change, AI, geopolitics, and conflict**, leading to a call for visionary leaders to "change the rules of the global economy" before time runs out. Key topics in this issue include the ongoing **Ebola emergency** in the DRC and Uganda, the **Bonn climate meeting**, and the upcoming **G7 summit** and **UN High-Level meeting on HIV/AIDS**.

Featured Article (by Rajeev B R)

The Feat article provides a personal reflection on an IHP/EV residency at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. Rajeev explores the concept of "**agenda-setting**" in global health, observing how editorial decisions shape which stories gain visibility and influence policy. Drawing on his experiences at high-level events like the **World Health Summit**, he critiques the disconnect between elite discussions and local realities. He concludes that **durable change** must come from the **local level**, as the current global health architecture—with its funding hierarchies and conference circuits—is often unsuited for top-down transformation. He also highlights the "**epistemic violence**" of dismissing decolonisation and the critical need for **Global South perspectives** to influence established frameworks.

Highlights of the Week

Read of the Week

A group of prominent economists, including Joseph Stiglitz and Thomas Piketty, argue in *The Guardian* that **GDP growth is a doomed strategy** for eradicating poverty. They present a **roadmap for redesigning economies** around human rights, social protection, and collective wellbeing within **planetary boundaries**, moving beyond the narrow "grow-tax-transfer" approach.

Ebola Emergency: Overview of the Week

The **Africa CDC and WHO** have launched a **\$518 million joint continental response plan** to address the **Bundibugyo Ebola virus** outbreak. The plan focuses on a "One Response" approach across 11 pillars, including surveillance and community engagement. However, **funding controversies** remain, with initial donor pledges being "corrected" downward and less than \$3 million in "real money" reaching affected countries by early June.

Ebola Emergency: More Analysis, Key Advocacy, Snippets...

Experts call for an "**Ebola truce**"—a humanitarian pause—to allow for outbreak control in conflict-ridden areas of the DRC. Concerns are mounting as modelling suggests the outbreak could reach **10,000 to 20,000 cases** if not contained. The response faces challenges including **mistrust**, lack of rapid point-of-care tests, and the spread of the virus into **rebel-controlled health zones**.

More on PPPR

A high-profile open letter titled "**Enough. It Is Time to Get Deadly Serious**" decries the "cycle of panic and neglect" in global outbreak responses. It urges leaders to finalize the **WHO Pandemic Agreement**, establish predictable financing for the **100 Days Mission**, and accelerate regional self-reliance in medical countermeasures.

Global Health Reform

Current reform efforts are criticized for being **fragmented** and protecting dysfunctional institutional reputations rather than achieving "truth-telling". Debates continue regarding the potential **merger of UN agencies** (such as UN Women and UNFPA) and global funds (Gavi and the Global Fund), with some experts warning that such mergers might create **less focused organizations**.

Run-up to G7 Leaders Summit (Evian, France 15-17 June)

The summit will address **global health cooperation in a fractured world**, with the French presidency signaling a shift toward "**mutually beneficial partnerships**". However, a widening "bankability gap" due to **debt distress** in African nations threatens this transition.

More on Global Health Governance & Financing/Funding

The **WHO is at a strategic crossroads** as it faces significant **budget cuts**, which have resulted in a 40% staff reduction in some teams and forced a choice between emergency response and normative guideline development. Additionally, the **Gates Foundation** is undergoing an external review of its past engagement with Jeffrey Epstein.

Trump 2.0

The reclassification of thousands of federal scientists as "**at-will**" hires (Schedule F) has sparked fears of **political interference** in public health agencies. Reports of diabetes experts being removed from conferences for distributing criticism of the administration further highlight the growing **tension between science and politics**.

Bilateral Health Agreements & US Global Health Strategy

A **Human Rights Watch assessment** finds that recent U.S. bilateral health agreements tie aid to **abortion surveillance** and extractive rights to **pathogen samples**. Simultaneously, a "one-two punch" of U.S. and Global Fund cuts is projected to reduce support to 29 countries by **\$4.3 billion through 2029**.

World Cup Football

Health advocates are pressuring **FIFA to end its partnership with Coca-Cola** by 2030 to combat childhood obesity. While the U.S. has called for **Ebola-related travel bans** ahead of the tournament, researchers suggest that the actual risk of visiting fans spreading dangerous pathogens is relatively low.

Run-up to UN HL Meeting on HIV/AIDS (June 22-23)

Negotiations for a new **political declaration** are complicated by massive **funding gaps**, with some countries facing aid cuts of up to 97% by 2030. New data shows that **HIV services are not recovering** from these cuts, with steep declines in testing and prevention.

SRHR

A regressive "**Family Values**" **African charter**, which treats reproductive rights as a threat to the family, is moving toward potential adoption by the African Union. In contrast, the **WHO and Lancet** are launching a landmark series to redefine the prevention of **postpartum haemorrhage (PPH)**.

NCDs & Determinants of Health

Scholars suggest global health is preparing for the **wrong population problem**, arguing that the "disappearance of youth" and an **aging demographic** will be the defining challenge for LMICs. Experts also call for a "**6x6**" **approach to NCDs** to include oral health and sugars, challenging the current politically-driven framework.

Access to Medicines, Vaccines & other health technologies

CEPI is urged to strengthen **transparency and equity** in its vaccine contracts, ensuring that public R&D investments translate into public benefit through meaningful **technology transfer**. Meanwhile, non-profit R&D groups are **pooling resources** to address unmet needs in neglected diseases.

Planetary Health/Climate & Health

At the **Bonn climate meeting**, the health community is calling for a **tripling of adaptation finance**. Simultaneously, the UN reports "**severe and accelerating**" **pressure** on oceans, including a doubling in the rate of sea-level rise. New research also attributes nearly **\$1 trillion in annual climate damage** to the assets owned by the world's richest 1%.

Conflict/War & Health

Health experts argue that **peace is the most effective public health intervention** for the Eastern Mediterranean, where "dual destruction" of institutional and ecological infrastructure is occurring. There is also an urgent call for updated **humanitarian laws to address AI warfare**.

Some More Reports

A recent UN report finds that the world is on track for only **36% of SDG targets**, with 18% of targets showing regression since 2015.

Some key reads

Read of the Week

1. **O De Schutter**, *The Guardian* ([Link](#)): Leading economists present a rights-based roadmap for eradicating poverty that moves beyond the failed strategy of narrow GDP growth.

Ebola Emergency: Overview of the Week

2. **Africa CDC and WHO**, *WHO News* ([Link](#)): A joint \$518 million continental plan aims to rapidly detect and respond to the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak through a unified "One Response" approach.
3. **Devex** ([Link](#)): This analysis provides an inside look at the funding distribution for the Ebola response, highlighting significant controversy over corrected donor pledges.

Ebola Emergency: More Analysis, Key Advocacy, Snippets

4. **N Ngongo**, *The Lancet* ([Link](#)): A recap of the process behind the double public health emergency declaration issued by the WHO and Africa CDC.
5. **Emmanuel André**, *The Lancet* ([Link](#)): Experts call for an urgent "Ebola truce" among conflict actors in the DR Congo to allow for essential outbreak control measures.
6. **Jean B Nachega**, *The Lancet* ([Link](#)): This comment argues that the current outbreak should be a warning that epidemic preparedness remains insufficiently aligned with community realities.

More on PPPR

7. **The Independent Panel**, *Open Letter* ([Link](#)): High-level global health leaders demand an end to the "cycle of panic and neglect" regarding infectious disease threats.
8. **Nelson Aghogho Evaborhene**, *Global Policy* ([Link](#)): **Must-read** analysis exploring how the current Ebola response reveals persistent weaknesses in global health governance a decade after the West Africa crisis.

Global Health Reform

9. **Devex** ([Link](#)): Experts raise concerns that multiple parallel global health reform efforts are moving forward without necessary alignment or financing detail.
10. **Ebere Okereke**, *LinkedIn/The Lancet* ([Link](#)): Argues that global health can only reform if it tells the truth about donor distortion and moves from technical language to real accountability.

Run-up to G7 Leaders Summit

11. **University of Toronto**, *G7 Information Centre* ([Link](#)): A comprehensive curtain-raiser for the Evian Summit featuring viewpoints from Dr. Tedros on global health cooperation.
12. **IAI Brief** ([Link](#)): Highlights the widening "bankability gap" and debt distress that threaten to stall the transition to mutually beneficial global partnerships.

More on Global Health Governance & Financing/Funding

13. **Suerie Moon**, *Swissinfo* ([Link](#)): **Recommended read** on the WHO's strategic crossroads as budget cuts force a choice between normative work and operational emergency response.
14. **B Bedasso**, *CGD Blog* ([Link](#)): Examines whether private philanthropy is truly addressing gaps or simply duplicating choices in the changing aid landscape.

Trump 2.0

15. **Scientific American** ([Link](#)): Reports on the reclassification of federal epidemiologists as "at-will" hires, potentially exposing public health agencies to political interference.
16. **J Carter, BMJ Editorial** ([Link](#)): Argues that the administration's "Restoring" of standards is actually a means of political control that harms American science.

Bilateral Health Agreements & US Global Health Strategy

17. **Human Rights Watch** ([Link](#)): Assesses seven bilateral agreements that tie U.S. health aid to harmful conditions like abortion surveillance and extractive data rights.
18. **KFF Analysis** ([Link](#)): Estimates that combined U.S. and Global Fund cuts will reduce health support to 29 countries by \$4.3 billion through 2029.

World Cup Football

19. **Health Policy Watch** ([Link](#)): Global health advocates pressure FIFA to end its partnership with Coca-Cola by 2030 to combat childhood obesity.
20. **Alessandro Vespignani, Science** ([Link](#)): Research suggests the World Cup is unlikely to pose major additional infectious disease risks to the United States.

Run-up to UN HL Meeting on HIV/AIDS

21. **A Green, Devex** ([Link](#)): **Must-read** analysis of the tensions surrounding the new UN political declaration as funding for the global HIV response shifts.
22. **Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), Devex** ([Link](#)): New data reveals that essential HIV testing and prevention services are not recovering from recent steep funding cuts.

SRHR

23. **The Guardian** ([Link](#)): Rights groups condemn a regressive African charter that characterizes reproductive rights as a threat to family values.
24. **WHO and The Lancet** ([Link](#)): **Landmark series** unveiling a transformative roadmap for preventing postpartum haemorrhage, the world's leading cause of maternal death.

NCDs & Determinants of Health

25. **Mike's Substack** ([Link](#)): Argues that global health is preoccupied with population growth while the "disappearance of youth" is becoming a massive challenge for LMICs.
26. **Habib Benzian & S Naidoo, Substack** ([Link](#)): Proposes a "6x6" NCD framework to include oral health and sugars, challenging the political settlements that limit the current 5x5 model.

Access to Medicines, Vaccines & other health technologies

27. **M Whiteman, The Lancet** ([Link](#)): **Important read** calling for CEPI to enhance global vaccine equity through transparent contract terms and systematic support for regional manufacturing.
28. **MSF Access** ([Link](#)): MSF outlines critical principles for ensuring that R&D processes for Ebola tools embed enforceable access arrangements from the outset.

Planetary Health/Climate & Health

29. **Global Climate and Health Alliance** ([Link](#)): Calls on the Bonn climate meeting to triple public adaptation finance to USD 120 billion by 2035.
30. **Greenpeace**, *The Guardian* ([Link](#)): New research calculates that the assets of the world's richest 1% cause nearly \$1 trillion in annual climate damage.

Conflict/War & Health

31. **M Karamouzian**, *BMJ* ([Link](#)): Argues that peace is the most effective public health intervention to prevent the "dual destruction" of health infrastructure and the environment.