

IHP News 887: AI summary & some key reads

Introduction

The week of 3 July 2026 was marked by critical developments across several global health fronts. Formal **negotiations for the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system are set to resume**, while the **UNAIDS board continues to evaluate an interim report on organizational reform**. On the environmental front, **extreme heat has been officially designated a public health crisis**, with an estimated 500,000 deaths annually highlighting severe global inequalities. A significant advocacy effort is also underway, as **Global 50/50 has launched an open letter** urging candidates for the next UN Secretary-General to commit to five priorities for advancing gender equality. Furthermore, the **European Global Health Policy Forum** in Brussels focused on the **Global Health Resilience Initiative (GHRI)**, a political effort to operationalise the 2022 EU Global Health Strategy in a drastically changed global environment. This forum highlighted tensions regarding civil society representation and the complexities of the GHRI's "fifth pillar," which aims to counter foreign information manipulation.

The **Featured Article**, written by **Eunice Lobo**, addresses the **caregiver's dilemma in urban poor India**. Lobo argues that India's vision for a prosperous future by 2047 (Viksit Bharat@2047) must address the fundamental question of **who is available to raise children in rapidly growing cities**. Her research in Bengaluru suggests that **"time poverty" and caregiving constraints** are primary barriers to child development that traditional nutrition or preschool programmes cannot solve alone.

Highlights of the Week

Ebola Emergency: WHO & Africa CDC messages The Ebola situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has reached a critical stage, with the **whereabouts of nearly 300 infected individuals unknown** due to conflict and humanitarian displacement. Africa CDC officials warn of "huge, huge community transmission" as **modelling predicts thousands of cases and deaths by September**. Currently, health workers are only able to monitor **30% of contacts**, far below the 80% required for control. The outbreak has now spread to a **fourth province, Haut-Uele**, which shares borders with South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Ebola emergency: more analysis, advocacy, reports, news snippets... Beyond the immediate health threat, the UNDP warns that the Ebola crisis is a **major socioeconomic shock** that could push nearly one million more people into poverty and cost African economies billions of dollars. Experts in *The Lancet* argue that the response is being hampered by a **"cognition gap"**—the interval between the epidemic's spread and the ability of institutions to understand and synthesise data in real-time. Additionally, there are concerns that **shifts in US global health policy** are challenging the principles of partnership and scientific expertise that historically underpinned its leadership.

More on PPPR, GHS & other health emergencies Member states are reconvening for **IGWG 7 to finalise the PABS system** by the end of 2026. To strengthen regional response, the **Joint Continental Incident Management Support Team (IMST)** was launched in Uganda to coordinate efforts against the Bundibugyo Virus Disease (BVD). Simultaneously, the detection of **Marburg virus cases in Uganda** threatens to further complicate regional emergency efforts. Experts are calling for a shift from pathogen-specific to **"pathogen-agnostic" diagnostic systems** to better prepare for future pandemics.

AMR The WHO has issued a new blueprint to help nations confront the rising burden of **fungal disease and antifungal resistance**, a neglected area often missing from national health plans. Fungal diseases currently affect over 300 million people annually, with **antifungal resistance growing** due to widespread use across human, animal, and plant health sectors.

Global Health Reform, the future of international cooperation & post-2030 brainstorm The "Accra Reset" initiative, led by countries of the Global Majority, aims to confront entrenched power imbalances by focusing on **national responsibility and domestic resource mobilisation**. Meanwhile, **UNAIDS is fighting for survival** as the UN considers "sunsetting" the organisation by 2026. A working group is exploring alternatives, such as a leaner "hub" or merger, while insisting that the **role of civil society must remain "non-negotiable"**.

More on Global Health Governance & Financing/Funding A contentious race is underway for the **new Executive Director of the Global Fund**, with three US citizens reportedly on the shortlist. This comes as the Fund faces a **\$5.36 billion funding gap**. Elsewhere, billionaire Warren Buffett has **delayed his donation to the Gates Foundation** pending a review of the foundation's ties to Jeffrey Epstein, raising questions about the fragility of billionaire-led philanthropy in global health.

More on the impact of aid cuts & journey towards health sovereignty The IMF reports that **official development assistance is falling fast in Africa**, where many countries rely on aid for up to 6% of their GDP. In South Africa, **US withdrawal of HIV funding** threatens to derail progress and dismantle crucial research networks. To sustain HIV care under fiscal constraints, researchers propose a transition to **"enabled self-care,"** utilizing pharmacies and community workers to distribute tests and antiretrovirals.

Global Tax Justice The **Extreme Wealth Line (EWL) project** has published foundational papers arguing for a cap on wealth similar to how the world monitors extreme poverty. This proposal coincides with news that the **number of billionaires globally has soared by 13%**, largely due to an AI shares boom.

UHC & PHC An editorial in the *BMJ* warns against the **dangers of "finance capital" in healthcare**. The authors argue that while development agencies promote commercial investment to fill UHC gaps, the demand for **private profit can compromise quality**, increase prices, and lead to the "assetisation" of profitable health services while leaving the public sector to manage unprofitable ones.

Trump 2.0 & US Global Health strategy & bilateral health agreements The Trump administration is aggressively rebuilding the US foreign assistance system, **shifting away from the WHO and multilateralism** toward **bilateral health agreements** (MOUs). To date, 33 such MOUs have been signed, representing over **\$20 billion in joint funding**. However, proposed **budget cuts to the NIH** (including a 28% cut to NIAID) threaten to derail basic research, including the search for an HIV vaccine.

Polio While the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) has made progress, **polio transition in the African Region remains limited**. Gaps in routine immunisation, emergency preparedness, and declining donor support pose significant risks as countries attempt to integrate polio functions into their broader national health systems.

NCDs At the ICPPA 2026 conference, African health experts renewed commitments to scale up **PEN-Plus**, a model for decentralising care for severe chronic diseases like type 1 diabetes and sickle cell disease. Separately, a study suggests that **medication is narrowing the gap** between blood pressure

and cholesterol levels in obese versus normal-BMI adults in high-income countries, though other obesity-related risks like cancer remain.

Planetary Health (& Climate/health) Following a shift in power, **Colombia's commitment to halting fossil-fuel expansion is under threat**, which could impact international climate efforts. Meanwhile, a G7 gathering in Paris highlighted that **finance remains the weakest link** in the climate-health response, with no binding commitments or dedicated funds inside formal UN negotiations. In India, experts warn that **official heatwave death counts are grossly underestimated**, missing the full impact of excess deaths during extreme heat events.

Human Resources for Health Global health workforce data availability has grown, yet **deep inequalities persist**, with the African Region having the lowest worker density. Furthermore, an **ageing crisis** looms, with one-third of doctors in high-income countries expected to retire in the next decade.

Access to medicines, vaccines & other health technologies The *BMJ* has critiqued the WHO's strategy for **traditional and alternative medicine**, arguing that such interventions must withstand standard scientific scrutiny before integration into national systems. Conversely, a comprehensive review has **affirmed the safety and efficacy of mRNA vaccines**, noting their potential for future treatments for influenza and cancer. In Brazil, LGBTQIA+ groups are demanding **equitable access to lenacapavir** for HIV prevention, citing concerns over its high cost.

Conflict/War & health Armed conflict continues to be a **well-worn path to measles resurgence**, as war weakens immunisation systems and surveillance. Protecting routine vaccination during crises remains a core, though often difficult, emergency response requirement.

Some more reports, supplements,... A new supplement from the **8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2024)** emphasizes that advancing justice and sustainability is a **process negotiated through power relations** within national and local settings, rather than a top-down global directive. Additionally, the UN World Drug Report 2026 notes that **global drug use has reached a record high**, with synthetic substances rapidly reshaping illicit markets.

Miscellaneous Preparations are intensifying for the **UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2026)** in New York, focused on coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda. Finally, the UN has warned that the **rapid spread of AI may worsen global inequality** without a shared framework for responsible development.

Key Reads of the Week

Ebola Emergency: WHO & Africa CDC messages

1. **The Guardian** – [Whereabouts of nearly 300 people with Ebola unknown in DRC](#): Health workers lack access to camps housing over 1 million people, leading to fears of massive community transmission.
2. **Cidrap News** – [As Ebola deaths top 300, African officials meet to boost regional readiness](#): Africa CDC is convening 13 countries to move from planning to operational readiness at borders and health facilities.

Ebola emergency: more analysis, advocacy, reports, news snippets...

3. **UNDP** – [Ebola Outbreak Could Push Nearly One Million More People into Poverty](#): This assessment warns that the outbreak is a development crisis that could cost African economies \$3.6 billion. 4. **Krutika Kuppalli et al (The Lancet)** – [The US Ebola response and the future of global health leadership](#): Experts argue that shifts in US policy are challenging the principles of scientific expertise and partnership that underpin global health engagement.

More on PPPR, GHS & other health emergencies

5. **RANI's newsletter** – [New chapter on PABS negotiations](#): Formal negotiations resume for the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing system with an ambitious goal to finalise the system by year-end. 6. **H Clark et al (Health Policy Watch)** – [UN Member States Have an Unmissable Responsibility to Better Protect Us Against Outbreaks and Pandemics](#): This article highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive monitoring mechanism as key global bodies prepare to close.

AMR

7. **UN News** – [New WHO plan urges stronger action against fungal disease](#): The WHO's new blueprint addresses the rising threat of antifungal resistance, which is currently missing from most national health plans.

Global Health Reform, the future of international cooperation & post-2030 brainstorm

8. **Anders Nordström (LinkedIn)** – [The Accra Reset](#): This post discusses the pivotal role of the Accra Reset in addressing power imbalances and shifting focus to national health responsibilities. 9. **Geneva Solutions** – [Sunset or new dawn? UNAids fights for survival](#): While the UN explores "sunsetting" the agency, its board is fighting for a leaner model that preserves the role of civil society.

More on Global Health Governance & Financing/Funding

10. **Health Policy Watch** – [Three Candidates Vying for Global Fund Leadership in Contentious Race](#): Three US citizens are reportedly on the shortlist to lead the Global Fund as it faces a multi-billion dollar funding gap. 11. **J Ratevosian (Substack)** – [Does the UN Political Declaration on HIV/ AIDS Even Matter Anymore?](#): A **recommended** analysis questioning if the global machinery still exists to turn high-level political declarations into meaningful action.

More on the impact of aid cuts & journey towards health sovereignty

12. **C Aoyagi et al (IMF Country Focus)** – [Aid Is Falling Fast. What Can African Countries Do?](#): Donors are making deep cuts to aid, forcing African policymakers to choose between cutting public investment or increasing debt. 13. **Devex** – [Can South Africa survive a post-PEPFAR future?](#): Experts warn that the withdrawal of US HIV funding could collapse the country's robust research networks and service delivery.

Global Tax Justice

14. **Extreme Wealth Line Project (LSE)** – [Foundations for a harm-based extreme wealth line](#): These foundational papers argue for a wealth "top line" similar to the poverty "bottom line" to monitor global inequality.

UHC & PHC 15. **David McCoy et al (BMJ Editorial)** – [Dangers of finance capital in healthcare](#): The authors warn that the demand for private profit can compromise care quality and lead to the "assetisation" of health services.

Trump 2.0 & US Global Health strategy & bilateral health agreements

16. **Devex** – [State Department's foreign aid chief heads to the White House](#): Jeremy Lewin, who coordinated the launch of over 30 bilateral health MOUs, is moving to the National Security Council.

17. **US State Department** – [Implementing America First Global Health Strategy in South Sudan](#): A new three-year MOU represents over \$146 million in U.S. assistance alongside South Sudanese co-investment.

Polio

18. **T Nomwanghe et al (BMC Infectious Diseases)** – [Polio transition in the African Region](#): Research shows that routine vaccine coverage remains suboptimal across the region as countries struggle to integrate polio functions.

NCDs

19. **WHO Afro** – [Health experts renew commitments to transform care for severe NCDs](#): African experts are calling for the expansion of PEN-Plus to decentralise specialized care for severe chronic conditions. 20. **The Lancet** – [Metabolic traits in obesity and normal BMI in industrialised countries](#): A multi-country analysis suggests medication is closing the blood pressure and cholesterol gap between obese and normal-BMI adults over 40.

Planetary Health (& Climate/health)

21. **Carbon Brief** – [Q&A: What change of power in Colombia could mean for world's fossil-fuel transition](#): The defeat of an ally of Gustavo Petro may derail Colombia's leadership in international climate talks and fossil-fuel phase-outs. 22. **Health Policy Watch** – [The Climate-Health Crisis Needs Money, Not More Declarations](#): Analysis of the G7 meeting reveals that climate finance remains the weakest link in the global response to the health crisis.

Human Resources for Health

23. **WHO** – [National health workforce accounts: health workforce levels and trends 2026](#): Global data shows deep inequalities in worker density and a looming retirement crisis for doctors in high-income countries.

Access to Medicines, vaccines & other health technologies

24. **C A Philips et al (BMJ Editorial)** – [WHO's misguided push for complementary and alternative medicine](#): This editorial argues that traditional medicine must be subjected to standard scientific scrutiny for safety and efficacy before integration. 25. **The Lancet** – [Safety and efficacy of mRNA vaccines](#): A comprehensive review confirms that approved mRNA vaccines are safe and effective, with significant promise for treating cancer and influenza.

Conflict/War & health

26. **José E. Hagan (PLOS Medicine)** – [The well-worn path from armed conflict to measles resurgence](#): Conflict weakens health systems and socioeconomic resilience, making the protection of routine vaccination a core emergency requirement.

Some more reports, supplements, ...

27. **Nanuka Jalaghoona et al (Health Systems Global)** – [Changing Health Systems: Advancing Justice and Sustainability](#): This special supplement argues that justice in health systems is a process negotiated through domestic power relations. 28. **UN News** – [Global drug use reaches record high](#): The 2026 UN World Drug Report warns that synthetic substances are reshaping markets and exposing vulnerable populations to greater risks.

Miscellaneous

29. **IISD** – [HLPF Prepares to Advance Transformative, Coordinated Actions for SDGs](#): Preparations are intensifying for the July forum in New York to address sustainable development goals for 2030 and beyond. 30. **Nature (News)** – [Have people stopped trusting science?](#): Research into a supposed "global crisis of trust" reveals that the real problems lie in specific segments of society and information dissemination.