



C20 Eight Proposed Recommendations for Effective G20 Agenda on Finance and Health

As a global community of +750 representatives of the world's civil society, the C20 official Engagement Group of the G20 is submitting a list of policy priorities for the upcoming G20 Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors meeting on July 18th and the G20 Extraordinary Sherpa Meeting on July 24th. The proposed recommendations take into account complimentary policy areas at the intersection of health and finance policymaking; **including funding gaps, systemic, fiscal and financial priorities to put global finances at the service of global health.**

We welcome the initiative to host a Joint Health & Finance Ministers meeting and we recommend that this meeting is held annually. COVID-19 is a global crisis of health, economic, social and political dimensions and it requires a collective global response that prioritizes leaving no one behind. It is an urgent reminder that we need to increase health investment in what we know works: strong international partnerships, health systems that reach everyone, research and development (R&D) that is affordable and accessible by all, evidence-based actions to address malnutrition, a gender and rights-based approach to care, multi-sectoral collaboration, and empowered and capacitated community and civil society partners to help deliver the response.

As a forum for the world's largest economies, the G20 is uniquely positioned and has a responsibility to act collectively. This has proved effective in the past. In 2008, the G20 mobilized in response to the financial crisis. In 2014, during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, G20 Leaders responded with their first collective commitments on global health. They highlighted the G20's comparative advantage in addressing "longer-term systemic issues and gaps in capability, preparedness and response capacity that expose the global economy to the impacts of infectious disease and announcing a range of measures to strengthen national, regional and global preparedness against threats posed by infectious diseases to global health." G20 efforts in mobilising resources for the prevention and control of Ebola proved effective in contributing to international efforts. Now, a collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic is required with a focus on the following:

1) Bridge the urgent funding gaps to prevent deadly secondary impacts of COVID-19:

We welcome the recent G20 contributions to the successful replenishment of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. G20 countries should commit to ambitious and increased funding pledges for other international partnerships to continue essential health services:

- Fund the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the COVID-19 strategy update, and the 13th General Programme of Work for WHO (2019-2023).
- Channel a portion of COVID-19 funding through the Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) to both enable a rapid and efficient pandemic response, as well as ensure that vital HIV, tuberculosis and malaria programmes continue during and after the pandemic. In line with the Global Fund's [recent report](#), G20 countries must contribute their share of the needed US\$5 billion additional funding to the Global Fund.
- Ensure the activities of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) are resumed once it is safe to do so, following the suspension of polio preventative campaigns and outbreak response due to COVID-19. This will require adequate funding of GPEI's Endgame Strategy, which requires US\$3.27 billion in pursuit of the eradication of polio by the end of 2023.
- Commit to make a pledge at, or in the lead up to, the [Nutrition for Growth Summit](#) hosted by Japan in December 2021, in recognition of adequate nutrition being crucial to healthy and productive lives.
- Support pooled procurement mechanisms, such as the Global Drug Facility, to ensure robust supply and procurement of COVID-19 commodities as well as essential tools to fight other infectious diseases such as tuberculosis.

2) Commit to health investments that are fair, globally available, and affordable by all:

We welcome G20 contributions to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. The need for global public goods to be affordable, safe, effective, easily administered and universally available for everyone has been widely recognised. The G20 must now play a role in defining how equitable access will be achieved and what the global governance structure will look like.

- Access, affordability and transparency should be integral requirements of the entire research and development (R&D) and manufacturing process. This would include attaching access conditions to G20 funding and promoting the full use of TRIPS flexibilities including compulsory licenses, open science and licensing, pooling of intellectual property and data, and technology transfers and exchanges.
- Technology and intellectual property owners should commit patents, know-how, cell lines, copyright, software, data, and all other relevant intellectual property to be openly available in the public domain. This includes open, non-exclusive licensing to the benefits of scientific progress. We would welcome full support by all G20 members for the WHO COVID technology pool – C-TAP.

3) Invest in R&D and manufacturing capacity for COVID-19 and beyond:

- Support and build resilient regional and local supply and procurement systems to facilitate quick, flexible and coordinated responses to ensure access and prevent stock-outs of technologies, equipment and supplies globally.
- Dramatically scale up investments in the manufacturing of all COVID-related medical tools for global accessibility, and to equally support enhanced local and regional manufacturing in the Global South. This could be done in partnership with the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN) and other global efforts to build critical manufacturing capacity in the developing world.
- Channel R&D funding through partnerships such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and Unitaid.

4) Prioritize the strengthening of health systems in the Global South and for vulnerable people:

The secondary impacts of COVID-19 could be far greater than from COVID-19 itself. G20 countries must learn from previous epidemics, for [example](#) during the 2014-15 Ebola crisis in West Africa, additional HIV, TB and malaria deaths as an indirect consequence of the outbreak exceeded deaths directly caused by Ebola. We face dire predictions for a repetition of history as COVID-19 could cause a reversal in progress against TB by 8 years, an increase in HIV-related deaths by 10% over five years, and a doubling of the number of malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa. As such we recommend the following:

- Mobilize US\$ 500 billion Marshall Plan for a Health Recovery, as per UNCTAD's recommendation, by honoring at least a quarter of the undelivered past ODA promises.
- G20 financing is insufficient with the absence of funding commitments to surge and strengthen public health systems including training and recruiting paid and protected health workers; as well as the suspension of user fees and insurance conditions to ensure unconditional access to all health services for all free at the point of use.
- G20 countries should cease using development financing to invest in and subsidize expensive for-profit health care providers beyond the reach of people living on low incomes.
- Ensuring that essential HIV, TB, malaria, and other services are protected and bolstered by the resources invested in COVID-19. For example, invest to scale-up molecular testing, contact tracing, appropriate triage and care.
- Further, in recognition of disruptions and delays to ongoing clinical trials for other infectious diseases, such as HIV, tuberculosis and neglected tropical

diseases (NTDs), commit to “catch up” once it is safe to do so. Further, ensure that increased investments in R&D infrastructure is leveraged for other infectious diseases.

- G20 countries should support the increase of sustainable government spending on health to at least 5% of GDP on health, at home, and in developing countries. Governments should raise revenue for health and nutrition systems in an equitable way, through prepaid, mandatory and progressive taxation, pooling all public funds to increase purchasing power. Persistent underfunding of healthcare systems, even in advanced countries, has results in dwindled pandemic preparedness. National plans must incorporate sustainable financing for community-based health services and ensure that civil society, as well as vulnerable and marginalized populations, are involved in planning.
- G20 should assist to immediately double the level of public spending on health in the Global South. This must include an empowered and capacitated community response and investments in adequate manufacturing capacity for essential medical supplies.
- Donor governments should invest at least 0.7% of their GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) with a priority on global health; and ensure sustainability of all investments, building in timely capacity and risk assessments, analysis of donor transitions, and providing the necessary technical assistance.
- In line with SDG17, developed countries should fully implement their ODA commitments and dedicate 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries. G20 countries should also scale up ODA commitments, and avoid reallocating or re-routing existing ODA flows to emergency packages or debt reliefs.

5) Uphold human rights in global health by leaving no one behind:

- Any Financing for Health frameworks must be grounded in a human-rights based approach, prioritize primary health care, ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including maternal and child health (MCH), and gender equality. It must also recognize nutrition as key to health and development, prioritize water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in all health facilities. Health financing should also ensure access to safe and affordable surgical, obstetric and anaesthetic care.
- G20 countries must also ensure that women and girls have access to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response services, including GBV survivor services such as temporary shelter, safe housing, and financial support. COVID-19 disproportionately affects women and girls, vulnerable and marginalized people, such as people living in poverty, people who are

malnourished, elderly people (including those with dementia), homeless people, people with disabilities, ethnic communities, prisoners, migrants, refugees, and people with existing health conditions.

6) Commit to Accountability, Transparency, and Public Scrutiny:

- Every public health expenditure and procurement must be transparent, subject to public scrutiny, with mechanisms to prevent corruption, and accountability to citizens. Oversight bodies that include civil society and other stakeholders should be established to scrutinize decisions and help maintain public trust.
- G20 must set clear, concrete, time-bound, costed, and publicly communicated Universal Health Coverage plans, financing strategies, and targets, developed through inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues, including civil society. At the same time, G20 should leave no countries behind in the context of UHC, especially countries with heavy disease burdens as well as political and economic crises.
- G20 must adopt disaster risk reduction financing strategies and financial instruments to strengthen the preparedness and effective response in future crises.
- G20 should reaffirm their commitment to the 2019 G20 Shared Understanding on the Importance of UHC Financing in Developing Countries, and discuss its expansion, follow up, regular review, and national implementation.

7) Commit to continuity of G20 health financing policy by establishing a Joint Finance Health Ministerial Meeting annually:

- We ask that upcoming G20 Presidencies commit to holding a Joint Meeting annually to discuss continuous realignment of financial systems, finance regulation, and financing with human-rights based global health priorities. We count on Italy and India to continue upholding this newly-adopted tradition after Japan and Saudi Arabia.

8) Adopt financial and systemic reforms in support of equitable recovery:

- G20 countries should only support fiscal stimulus packages designed to a) strengthen public systems and social infrastructure, particularly health, education and social protection, b) increase levels of decent employment with all necessary labor safeguard requirements, and c) support a just transition to tackle the climate challenge.
- G20 countries should adopt wider debt cancellation as the fastest way to free up resources to tackle COVID-19. This pandemic and its accompanying economic and commodity price shocks will inevitably expose more countries to risks of

debt distress. Currently high indebtedness in developing countries hinders their ability to withstand the impacts of the global crisis. While commending the initial steps by the G20 for temporary debt service suspension, we urgently call for:

- Permanent Cancellation of all principle, interest, and charges on sovereign external debt payments, due to be made in 2020 and 2021. It should therefore not get postponed, referred, or accrue in the future.
- Provision of emergency additional finance which does not create debt. Emergency financing needs to not further compound debt vulnerabilities and is provided as grant-financing.
- G20 countries should support moves by any developing country to stop making payments on debt to private lenders, and promote legislation within key jurisdictions to prevent legal action against countries stopping debt payments.
- G20 countries should support expanding eligibility for concessional lending by international financial institutions (IFIs) and ensuring that decisions on emergency financing are free from geopolitical considerations.
- G20 countries should adopt national and multi-jurisdictional International Solidarity Levy, and Financial Transactions Taxes (FTTs), to finance SDG implementation (especially SDG3 on health) and reduce speculation and high frequency trading of financial assets, by applying progressively larger levies depending on price volatility.
- G20 countries should mandate the adoption of a broader Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) new deal, under the UN leadership, with consensus on emergency solutions targeting stock of wealth and extraordinary corporate profits.
- Relaxed financial market and bank regulations should have clear, strict conditions to be held accountable to, even during an emergency. For instance, relaxed regulations should only apply to those banks that will not distribute dividends based on their profits of last year and in 2020, nor buy back shares, and do not award bonuses, requiring a retaining of profits to strengthen buffers.
- The G20 should support a global agreement on smart capital controls, increase the availability of central bank currency swap lines to Emerging Markets, and encourage the IMF to establish a complimentary swap-type facility for developing countries, using the IMF's hard-currency resources.

[Civil Society 20 \(C20\)](#) is one of the eight independent Engagement Groups of the G20. It provides a platform of Civil Society Organizations around the world to bring forth a non-government and non-business voice.