

## US Halted Funding WHO

### Why in news?

US President halted its funds to the World Health Organization (WHO), saying it mismanaged the spread.

### Will there be any impact due to this halt?

- The US contributes almost 15% of the WHO's total funding and almost 31% of the member states' donations.
- The halt of this fund comes when the global caseload of COVID-19 approaches 2 million, with the most cases in the US.
- For the WHO, the loss of about 15% of its total funding is bound to have an impact the world over.
- However, unless other countries do the same as the US, the move may not severely restrict the WHO operations.

### From where does WHO get its funds?

- There are 4 kinds of contributions that make up funding for the WHO.
- **Assessed contributions** are the dues countries pay in order to be a member of the Organization.
- **Voluntary contributions** come from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners.
- **Core voluntary contributions** allow less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources.
- **PIP Contributions** Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Contributions was started in 2011.
- It will improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential.
- In recent years, assessed contributions to the WHO have declined, and now account for less than one-fourth of its funding.
- Voluntary contributions make up for most of the remaining funding.

### What does the WHO do with its funds?

- The WHO is involved in various programmes.
- In 2018-19, 19.36% was spent on polio eradication, 4.36% on prevention and control of outbreaks, etc.

- WHO South East Asia Region (including India) received \$375 mn.
- The Americas received \$62.2 mn for WHO projects.
- That is where most of WHO funding comes from and the least of it goes.

### **How does WHO prioritise spending?**

- The Annual Programme of Work is passed by the World Health Assembly (WHA), the WHO's decision-making body.
- Delegates from all member states attend the WHA, held annually.
- It focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board.
- The main functions of the Assembly are to determine the WHO policies and supervise financial policies.
- It also reviews and approves the proposed programme budget.
- The decision on which country gets how much depends on the situation in the countries.

### **How involved is WHO in India?**

- India became a party to the WHO Constitution on January 12, 1948.
- In 1948, the first session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia was held in the office of India's Health Minister.
- The Health Ministry and the WHO India country office developed the WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2019-2023 jointly.
- One of the CCS's priorities is to enhance India's global health leadership.
- On the ground, the WHO has been a key partner in the immunisation and nutrition programmes, tackling neglected diseases, etc.
- However, the credit for the success of a programme is always of the country; the WHO plays a supportive role.

### **How WHO and India worked together in the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- The WHO has been working closely with Health Ministry and various state governments on preparedness and response measures for Covid-19.
- However, India has largely built its own strategy.
- It is reluctant to test broadly for COVID-19; it has imposed early travel restrictions to and from China and then the lockdown.
- While India imposed a lockdown when cases were just 341 (March 22), its resistance to mass testing is akin to the US's strategy.
- India has also taken a call on universal use of masks when the WHO maintained that masks are not mandatory.

### **What is the criticism the WHO faces from various countries?**

- When most countries closed down air travel at the first stage, the WHO took

a long time stand against travel and trade restrictions on China.

- On January 30, the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee urged countries to be prepared.
- However, the Committee does not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available.
- In January, the cases were piling up in China.
- During this time, in a Delhi meeting, the WHO officials brushed aside government concern of human-to-human transmission.

**Source: The Indian Express**

