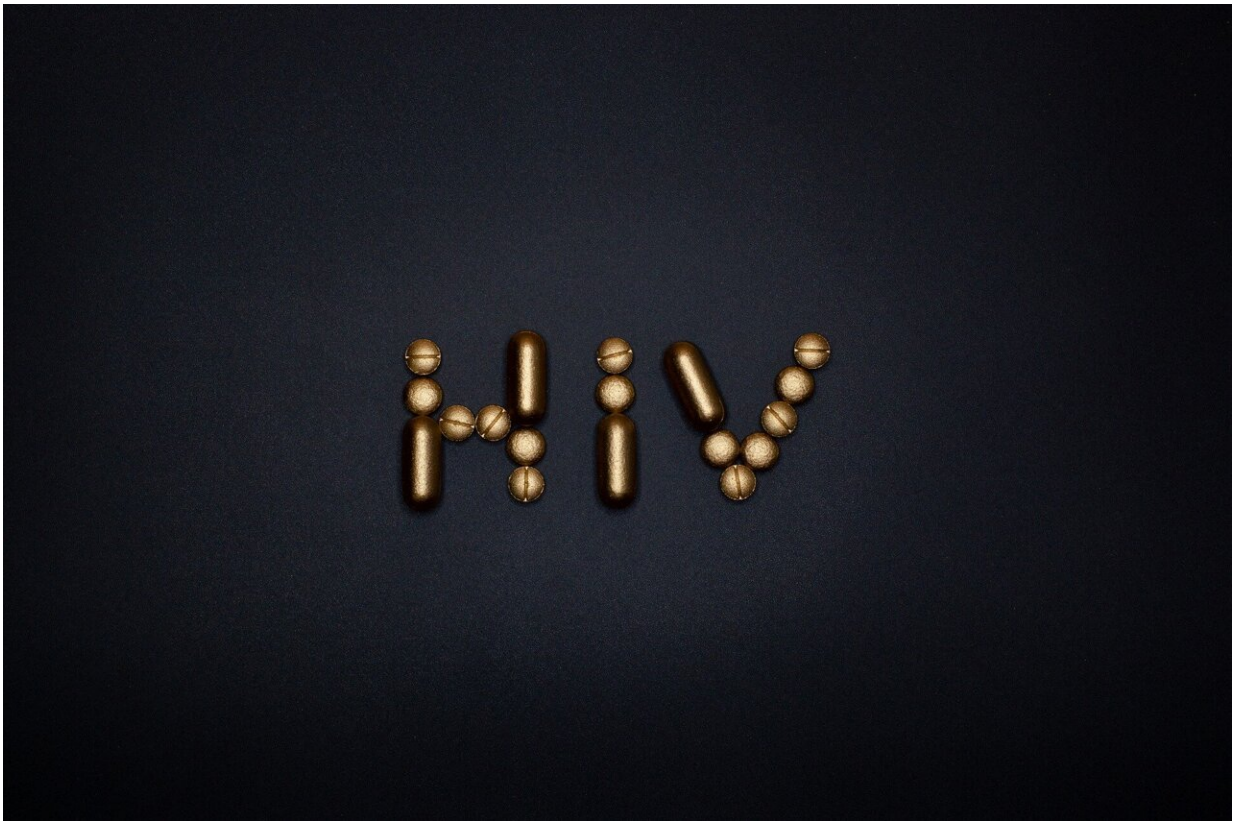


Global Fund raises \$14.25 billion to end HIV, TB and malaria

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The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria raised \$14.25 billion Wednesday at a donor conference led by US President Joe Biden, as decades of progress against the diseases are set back by COVID.

It was the highest amount ever pledged for a multilateral health organization—but fell far short of the ambitious goal of \$18 billion after the United Kingdom and Italy said their announcements would come later.

The Global Fund was created in 2002, bringing together governments, multilateral agencies, civil society groups and the private sector. Funding cycles last three years.

"What's happened today is actually an unparalleled mobilization of resources for global health," said Global Fund executive director Peter Sands, adding he expected Britain and Italy to make their pledges in due course.

"Thank you all for stepping up, especially in a challenging global economic environment, and I ask you, keep it going," urged Biden.

Among countries, the United States pledged the highest amount, \$6 billion, followed by France with 1.6 billion euros, 1.3 billion euros by Germany, \$1.08 billion by Japan, Can\$1.21 billion by Canada and 715 million Euros by the European Union.

The Gates Foundation pledged \$912 million.

The \$18-billion goal was based on getting back on track to end AIDS, TB and malaria by 2030, recovering ground lost during the COVID pandemic and saving 20 million lives over the next three years.

The target was 30 percent more than that raised during the organization's sixth and most recent replenishment, hosted by President Emmanuel Macron of France in 2019, which raised a then-record \$14 billion.

Camille Spire, president of the French non-profit AIDES, told AFP that

when the UK and Italy make their pledges, the sum would still be unlikely to reach the original goal.

"While some are counting their pennies, some are counting the dead," she said, adding she was "angry" and the outcome would mean fewer screening campaigns than had been hoped for, fewer treatments, less funding for community health centers and less strengthening of health systems.

There was also criticism within the UK. Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy tweeted the delay in pledging "will slow the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria and damage the UK's national interest."

Signs of recovery

The fund estimates it has reduced the death toll from AIDS, TB, and malaria by 50 percent, saving more than 50 million lives over the past two decades.

Last year, it warned that the COVID pandemic was having a devastating impact on its work, leading to declining results across the board for the first time in its history.

It said in its latest report, however, that the massive resources it had pumped into countering the downturn had paid off and "recovery is underway" against all three diseases.

The Global Fund provides 30 percent of all international financing for HIV programs, 76 percent of funding for TB, and 63 percent of funding for malaria.

Its other areas of focus include improving the resilience of local health systems, and raising funds against COVID-19.

According to US law, the country cannot provide more than one-third of funding for the Global Fund—a limit that serves as a matching challenge to other nations to double the American pledge.

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