

DISASTROUS DECISION: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP HALTING FUNDS TO WHO

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

At a time when the World Health Organisation has been seeking at least \$675 million additional funding for critical response efforts in countries most in need during the pandemic, U.S. President Trump has done the unthinkable — [halting funding to WHO](#) while a review is conducted to assess its “role in severely mismanaging and covering up the spread of [coronavirus](#)” and for “failing to adequately obtain, vet, and share information in a timely and transparent fashion”. The decision comes a week after he first threatened to put funding on hold for the global health body. At over \$500 million, the U.S. is WHO’s biggest contributor; [America is also the worst-affected country](#) — over 0.6 million cases and nearly 26,000 deaths. But halting funding at a crucial time will not only impact the functioning of the global body but also hurt humanity. Many low and middle-income countries that look up to WHO for guidance and advice, and even for essentials such as testing kits and masks, will be badly hit for no fault of theirs. With a little over two million cases and over 1,27,000 deaths globally, the pandemic has been unprecedented in scale. When solidarity and unmitigated support from every member-state is necessary to win the war against the virus, withholding funding will not be in the best interest of any country, the U.S. included. Failures due to oversight or other reasons, by WHO or member-states can always be looked into but not in the midst of a pandemic.

Coronavirus | Opeds and editorials

Contrary to what Mr. Trump claims, WHO cannot independently investigate but can only rely on individual member-states to share information. There has not been one instance when it has been found “covering up” the epidemic in China. Rather, it has been continuously urging countries to aggressively test people exhibiting symptoms and trace, quarantine and test contacts to contain the spread. It repeatedly spoke of the window of opportunity, and once warned that it is narrowing. Historically, WHO has been against travel and trade restrictions against countries experiencing outbreaks, and its position was no different when, in January, it declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern. But it did support China’s large-scale mitigation measures to contain the virus spread. Faulting WHO for imaginary failings cannot help Mr. Trump wash his hands of many administrative failures in containing the epidemic. He has been blaming everyone else for his shortcomings in dealing with COVID-19. But moving beyond blaming and actually withholding WHO funding can have disastrous outcomes. If indeed he fervently believes that the U.S. has been misled, it is China that he must hold responsible for a delayed alert. Previously, he praised both China and WHO. Obviously, the change in line is linked to a desperate bid to hide his own failures.

Why you should pay for quality journalism - [Click to know more](#)

Please enter a valid email address.

From the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, to the landmark Ayodhya verdict, 2019 proved to be an eventful year.

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or [Subscribe to The Hindu](#).

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com