

## 'U.S. WILL PAY OVER \$200 MILLION TO WHO'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Antony Blinken

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that his country would pay the World Health Organization (WHO) \$200 million by the end of this month. The announcement is significant as former U.S. President Donald Trump had begun the process of withdrawing the U.S. from the WHO, a process stopped by his successor, President Joe Biden.

"Today, I'm pleased to confirm that by the end of the month, the United States intends to pay over 200 million in assessed and current obligations to the WHO," Mr. Blinken told Foreign Ministers of UN Security Council member countries, at an online meeting to discuss the response to the pandemic. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was also part of the meeting.

"This is a key step forward in fulfilling our financial obligations as a WHO member and it reflects our renewed commitment to ensuring the WHO has the support it needs to lead the global response to the pandemic — even as we work to reform it for the future," Mr. Blinken said. The U.S. is the largest funder of the WHO, contributing more than 15% of its total funds.

Mr. Trump had pulled the U.S. out of the WHO, which he had called a 'puppet of China'. This process would have been complete in mid-2021, but Mr. Biden reversed it hours after assuming office last month.

"The U.S. believes that multilateralism, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, are essential not just as an effective international COVID-19 health and humanitarian response but also building stronger global health capacity and security for the future," Mr. Blinken told his counterparts on Wednesday.

"We plan to provide significant financial support to COVAX through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. And we'll work to strengthen other multilateral initiatives involved in the global COVID-19 response — for example, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria," Mr. Blinken said.

The Secretary also said all countries must be held to their human rights obligations. "No country should be allowed to use COVID-19 as an excuse to violate human rights or fundamental freedoms."

### On China

In what were presumably veiled references to China, Mr. Blinken called for transparency on outbreak data, saying countries should participate in "transparent and robust processes" in their prevention and response to health emergencies.

"The ongoing expert investigation about the origins of this pandemic — and the report that will be issued — must be independent, with findings based on science and facts and free from interference," he said. Last week, a team of experts for the WHO had concluded a trip to China to trace the origins of the coronavirus.

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