

Concept Note: Policy Dialogue: Navigating International Aid Cuts and Their Impact on African Health Systems

Date: 14th July 2025, 12:00 – 13:30 (BST)

Background

The recent cuts to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have raised concerns about the sustainability of critical health programs across the Africa continent. While the full impact is still being examined, early analyses have reported the termination of 90% of 6,300 USAIDS projects. The World Health Organization have warned that the loss of USAID could reverse decades of progress, leading to a surge in preventable deaths such as 107,000 deaths that is anticipated due to disruption to malaria programs and three million additional HIV-related deaths linked to cuts to PEPFAR.

Whilst much of the focus has been on USAID cuts, other international donors such as France and Germany have announced cuts of between 8% and 70% to international aid in 2025 and 2026. In the UK, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds have been cut from 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to 0.5% in 2021 and the UK government has recently announced plans to further cut ODA to 0.3% by 2027.

Beyond the immediate health crises, the cuts in international aids have raised questions about the long-term sustainability of health systems in recipient countries and exposed the vulnerabilities of these health systems that have long been reliant on external funding.

This crisis presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The heavy reliance on foreign aid has long been criticised for creating parallel health systems that bypass national governance structures, thus undermining efforts to build resilient health systems. Many global health experts argue that aid should serve as a catalyst for development, rather than a long-term substitute for domestic investment.

This policy dialogue provides a critical platform to explore these challenges and opportunities. It will assess the broader health implications of cuts to international aids, focussing on how African nations can seize this moment to build more sustainable, locally funded health systems that are no longer vulnerable to external political decisions.

Objectives

This policy dialogue aims to:

- Assess the impact of cuts to international aids on African healthcare systems
- Examine the risks of over-reliance on international aid
- Identify opportunities for African-led solutions to ensure sustainable healthcare financing
- Advance the decolonisation agenda in global health, ensuring that future partnerships are led by African priorities rather than donor-driven agendas.
- Develop a set of actionable recommendations for African policymakers and donors.

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Chair: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Gafar Alawode, Managing Partner, DGI Consult Ltd, Nigeria Panellist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country perspective: Dr Atiya Mosam, Public health specialist, South Africa • Country perspective: Dr John Phuka, Executive Dean, School of Public Health, KUHeS, Malawi • Country perspective: Dr Sara Lavinia Brair, Senior Country Representative, The Carter Center, Sudan • Global perspective: Prof Neil Squires, The International Association of National Public Health Institutes
Audience: Policymakers, health experts, researchers, early career professionals

Draft Agenda outline

Title	Time	Note	Speaker
Welcome	5 mins	Welcome / house keeping	Andeyatso Kifasi
Africa SIG	5 mins	Introduction to FPH and Africa SIG	Africa SIG Leadership
Opening remarks	10 mins	Chair introduces the topic, panellists, and objectives of the discussion.	Chair
Panel discussion	40 mins	Moderator leads a structured discussion covering key themes. Impact of reduction in global aids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on different types of countries • How do the cuts affect low-income vs. middle-income countries? • Are some countries better positioned to adapt? Over-reliance foreign aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have African governments depended too much on international aid? • What structural weaknesses has this crisis exposed? Local solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for locally developed solutions • What funding mechanisms can replace lost foreign aid support? • How can the private sector and public-private partnerships contribute? The Decolonisation agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lessons does this crisis teach us about global health power dynamics? • How can African nations lead in setting their own development agendas? 	Chair and Panellists
Q&A with audience	20 mins	Moderated Q & A from the Audience	Chair
Closing remarks	10 mins	Key takeaways and next steps	Chair