

KEY MESSAGES ON ODA FUNDING CUTS -

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MdM Highlights the Achievements of International Aid and Urges Continued Support

International aid has been a cornerstone of global solidarity, driving remarkable progress in health and securing human rights all over the world. However, recent decisions by major donors to significantly reduce funding threaten these hard-won gains. MdM urges world leaders to reaffirm their commitment to support aid based on humanitarian principles and ensure that programs continue to support vulnerable populations worldwide.

Overview of the Most Significant Funding Cuts

Each chapter is free to update information for own government

Without urgent action, the sector could lose at least 50% of its funding, putting millions of lives at risk.

More information on ODA cuts per country [available here](#).

United States

- On Friday, January 24, 2025, the U.S. State Department issued a complete and immediate freeze on all U.S. foreign aid, subject to a 90-day review to determine its alignment with U.S. foreign policy priorities. This unprecedented move has created a fast-moving crisis affecting the entire aid sector, as it was announced without warning and with no safety net. This backlash is part of a broader, long-term trend of states drastically reducing their support for international aid.
- The Trump administration decided to terminate more than 90% of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs, according to a February 25 court document. Many projects, including those addressing HIV and other critical health initiatives, were initially covered by waivers but are now at risk. It remains unclear whether these projects can be reinstated.
- USAID funding (\$42billion in 2023, \$35billion in 2024) accounted for over 40% of global humanitarian aid in 2024. USAID funded projects in 158 countries, providing up to 50% of humanitarian aid in some of them.

Germany

- Currently, negotiations to build a new government coalition amongst the parties SPD and CDU/CSU are ongoing. Most likely the future alliance will have a conservative chancellor, Friedrich Merz (CDU).
- It can be foreseen, that significant funding cuts for ODA will be upheld for 2025. Funds had already reached a historic low in 2024 despite budget uncertainty and despite the habit of allocating costs for hosting refugees inside Germany to ODA. Compared to 2021, budget reduction might be up to 60% for 2025. Germany will not be able to comply with its commitment of dedicating 0,7% of its GNI (gross national income) to ODA.

France

- The 2025 finance law adopted in February 2024 ratifies a historic €2.1 billion cut in France's official development assistance (ODA), a 37% reduction (compared to an average 10% cut across other budgetary missions).

Belgium

- A 25% reduction in the international aid budget in 2025.

Netherlands

- The Dutch government will cut EUR 2,4 billion in ODA funding by 2027. The government will no longer continue investing in programmes on: women's rights, gender equality, education, sports and culture, climate and supporting local CSOs. They will focus the EUR 3,8 billion in ODA which is still left, on: economy and trade, security and stability, and migration.

United Kingdom:

- UK ODA is projected to decline due to a fall in GDP and decreasing in-donor refugee costs. The Prime Minister of the UK announced that the UK would raise its defense spending to 2.6% of GDP in 2027, which would be funded by reducing ODA from 0.5% of GNI to 0.3% in 2027. However, further cuts are expected to be implemented only from 2026 onwards.

Switzerland

- Switzerland's parliament approved a €118 million cut in international cooperation for 2025 (7.2%), with at least €342 million more expected from 2026 to 2028. These reductions will end three development programs (Albania, Bangladesh, Zambia) by 2028 and halt contributions to the Global Partnership for Education and UNAIDS from 2025.

Italy

- Compared to the commitment that Italy, like other donor countries, has made to allocate at least 0.70% of the gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA), the latest OECD data indicate a decline in the ratio achieved by Italy, which in

2023 was 0.27%. To achieve the expected objective, Italy should therefore more than double its allocations over the next 5 years.

- In the budget law for 2025, the Italian government has weakened the international development cooperation policy with a reduction of €115.3 million (-9.59%) in the budget available for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and a reduction of €32 million for the Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) compared to the previous budget law.

European Union

- No information on funding cuts available now. Current Multiannual Financial Framework from 2021 to 2027. Negotiations for post-2027 MFF ongoing.

The Impact of International Aid: A Record of Success

Strengthening Global Health

Health is a fundamental human right and key to sustainable development. In a globalized world, diseases cross borders, making international cooperation essential. Pandemics like COVID-19 highlight the need for strong healthcare systems and equitable access to resources. Collaboration through the WHO, cross-border research, and fair vaccine distribution helps address health disparities, benefiting all nations through stability and economic growth.

Thanks to international funding, the world has made significant strides in combating infectious diseases, improving reproductive health, and strengthening health systems. Achievements include:

- For instance, global life expectancy has increased by more than 6 years between 2000 and 2019.¹
- The near eradication of polio and smallpox.
- Improved access to HIV treatment and prevention programs, saving millions of lives. In 2023 still around 40 million people globally live with HIV, resulting in 630 000 people dying from AIDS-related illnesses in 2023. Though, new HIV infections have been reduced by 60% since the peak in 1995. In 2023, 1.3 million people were newly infected with HIV, compared to 3.3 million people in 1995.²
- Globally, the under-five child mortality rate declined by 60 per cent, from 93 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 37 in 2022.³
- Expanded sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), Maternal mortality has declined significantly, with the global maternal mortality ratio dropping by 34%

¹ <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-life-expectancy-and-healthy-life-expectancy>

² <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/fact-sheet>

³ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/>

between 2000 and 2020, largely due to improved obstetric care. Central and Southern Asia saw the fastest declines, while better access to reproductive health services and reduced unintended pregnancies also contributed to the global maternal health improvement.

MdM's contribution to Global Health

1. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

The joint efforts on HIV prevention and treatment have saved countless lives, supporting clinics with essential medications and care. Programs like PEPFAR have strengthened health systems in over 50 countries, reducing HIV transmission and improving survival rates.

Over the years, MdM and its partners have expanded access to contraception and strengthened sexual and reproductive rights. Efforts have led to significant legislative progress, with over 60 countries liberalizing abortion laws in the past 30 years.

Ongoing achievements in MdM Programs:

In 2023, around 30% of all MdM programs focused on SRHR. SRHR actions include the clinical and psychosocial management of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights, along with social mobilisation against violence and the promotion of gender rights.

Together with other partners, Médecins du Monde Canada, Switzerland, France and Spain are implementing the RESPECT project, launched in 2021, to promote health rights for vulnerable and marginalized individuals, particularly girls and young women aged 10 to 24 in Burkina Faso, Benin, and Haiti. Over five years, the project aims to reach 846,000 people, including 510,700 girls and women, recognizing youth as key influencers in adopting new health behaviours.

For instance, the DEVENIR project launched in Niger. This five-year initiative, led by the Médecins du Monde's Belgian and Canadian chapters, and the Canadian NGO SOCODEV, aims to contribute to the socio-economic development of Niger by reducing gender inequalities impacting the rights, health, and economic empowerment of 30,000 women and adolescent girls in Niamey and Agadez.

2. Crisis Interventions and Emergency Response

Humanitarian aid remains crucial in addressing global crises, assisting millions affected by conflict, displacement, and natural disasters. Despite rising humanitarian needs, MdM and other aid organizations continue to:

- Deliver primary healthcare, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health services in crisis zones.

- Provide safe water, sanitation, and essential medical supplies in regions experiencing acute humanitarian crises.
- Offer vital support in over 50 ongoing conflicts, where nearly 305 million people are projected to require urgent humanitarian assistance in 2025.

Ongoing Achievements in MdM Programs:

- In northwest Syria, MdM's 17 health centers continue to provide life-saving medical care despite ongoing crises.
- In South Kivu, DRC, our projects support over 600,000 people, including women and children, through maternal health, nutrition, and protection services.
- In northern Mali, MdM has ensured emergency care for 12,400 individuals, including 9,000 internally displaced people, amid ongoing conflict.

3. Advancing Harm Reduction and Disease Prevention

International funding has played a critical role in harm reduction (HR) and infectious disease prevention. Key achievements include:

- Effective tuberculosis (TB) control programs, reducing TB mortality rates worldwide.
- HR reduces HIV transmission, improves treatment adherence, and enhances overall health outcomes.
- Continued harm reduction initiatives mitigating the risks associated with drug use and unsafe practices.
- Strengthened global monitoring and response mechanisms to prevent future pandemics.

Ongoing achievements in MdM Programs:

- **Research & innovation:** In Armenia, Georgia and Tanzania, a joint innovative research program tends to facilitate the access to HCV testing and treatment, provide new type of syringes and introduce long-acting OAT to people who inject drugs.
- **Direct implementation:** In Myanmar, MdM provides holistic harm reduction services (OAT, needle and syringes and HIV) in 3 clinics in the Kachin region to approximately 2000 beneficiary per year for more than 20 years.
- **Technical support:** In Ivory Coast, Togo and Benin, MdM provide technical support to local ministries of Health in their policies to improve and implement harm reduction reforms. In Tanzania, development of technical assistance to develop OAT services in Burundi and Rwanda.

- **Stimulant drugs:** In Iraq, MDM opened in 2025 a community center for non-injecting drug users with MHPSS holistic services focusing on amphetamine users (crystal meth, Captagon).
- **Capacity building:** In Afghanistan, MDM strengthen the capacity of our local partner Bridge in the implementation and management of dropping center in Kaboul for injecting drug users.

The Consequences of Reduced Funding: A Risk to Global Health and Humanitarian Efforts

While international aid has made undeniable progress, funding cuts threaten to reverse decades of advancements. Key risks include:

- **Disruptions in HIV treatment:** Supply chain disruptions have left clinics in Uganda and Haiti unable to provide essential antiretroviral therapy, endangering millions. The halt of PEPFAR funding has forced clinic closures and staff layoffs across 50 countries, jeopardizing HIV prevention efforts.
- **Deterioration in reproductive health services:** Funding cuts have already denied 2.3 million women and girls access to contraceptive care. Only within the first 90-days of the US funding cuts, 11.7 million are affected, leading to approximately 4.2 million unintended pregnancies and 8,340 maternal deaths.
- **Increased risk of infectious disease outbreaks:** Cuts to WHO programs and TB treatment initiatives threaten global disease control efforts.
- **Growing humanitarian needs with shrinking resources:** The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has more than doubled over the last five years, and in 2022 alone, it grew by a third to an estimated 406.6 million people. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated in November 2023 that the gap between the financial requirements for its 'Global Humanitarian Overview' and resources stood at US\$41 billion.⁴
- **Rollback on access to safe abortion and SRHR:** Beyond funding cuts, the U.S. has withdrawn from the WHO, reinstated the Global Gag Rule, and launched an anti-abortion campaign. These policy rollbacks have restricted reproductive rights, dismantled gender equity initiatives, and politicized humanitarian aid, undermining decades of progress. [For more information click here.](#)
- **Impact on harm reduction world-wide:** the funding cuts have devastating impact to harm reduction services. They have led to the loss of essential programs, healthcare, and support for people who use drugs. The cuts threaten global public health efforts, increase overdose deaths, and undermine the fight against HIV, HCV, and TB: [click here to the joint INGO statement at CND 2025.](#) For

⁴ https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-growing-gaps-in-global-humanitarian-challenges?utm_source=chatgpt.com

example, the disruption of opioid agonist therapy (OAT) is a direct threat to life, and its interruption has already led to overdose deaths. For pregnant women, sudden withdrawal from OAT can result in miscarriage

Impact on Civil Society and Humanitarian actions

The impact of the global funding cuts of humanitarian aid and the decline in global international aid completely **destabilise the international humanitarian and cooperation system**, including local civil society initiatives and national infrastructures that relied on international support and partnerships. Some organizations are now facing the possibility of shutting down entirely, taking with them essential infrastructure and life-saving services. MdM has already been forced to shut down several programs due to USAID funding cuts. Since around 50% of our activities are financed by public funds the current cascade of funding cuts will have a strong impact on our ability to improve access to healthcare for all. Several UN institutions are also facing substantial funding cuts. They are critical for global health playing a crucial role for disease control as well as the coordination and implementation of life saving and development programs.

Additionally, reduced funding increases **the risk of politicized international aid and a shrinking space for civil society as such**, where support may be directed based on political agendas rather than humanitarian needs. This could lead to the exclusion of crucial initiatives, including those focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), when many studies over the past years show how important inclusion is for peace. In this context, the role of independent humanitarian actors becomes even more vital, ensuring that aid reaches vulnerable populations without political bias and that fundamental human rights remain at the centre of global relief efforts.

Impact on MdM programs by USAID cuts

Within its International Network, Médecins du Monde strives to diversify its funding sources as much as possible to limit dependence on donors and enhance resilience. However, some of our projects worldwide are still directly affected by the sudden USAID suspension, including those in Syria, DRC, Mali, Colombia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Myanmar, Türkiye, Mexico, and the USA. For example:

- **In northwest Syria**, which has been particularly affected by the recent change in power, 12 out of our 17 health centers have been forced to cease operations. As a result, for every month the US funding freeze continues, 9,000 patients will be deprived of the care they need. Our staff is also directly impacted, as we have been forced to suspend the contracts of 200 employees, due to the lack of funding.
- **In South Kivu, DRC**, more than 600,000 people, including women and children, rely on our U.S.-funded project to access essential health services, including maternal care, nutrition, clean water, sanitation, and protection. This region,

already weakened by an influx of 200,000 internally displaced persons and facing a worsening security and humanitarian situation due to the M23 crisis, are severely affected by the freeze of U.S. aid.

- **In northern Mali**, which is facing a complex humanitarian crisis due to ongoing conflict and instability, the suspension of our project activities for 90 days would result in approximately 12,400 vulnerable people, including 9,000 internally displaced people, not receiving emergency care.

A Call to Action: Governments Must Uphold Their Commitments

MdM urges all states to take responsibility for ensuring the continuation of international aid programs. We call on world leaders to:

- **Protect global health** by maintaining funding for critical health programs and institutions.
- **Prevent unnecessary deaths** by ensuring the continuity of life-saving humanitarian efforts.
- **Support marginalized and vulnerable populations**, ensuring they are not left behind.
- **Sustain the humanitarian sector**, preventing the closure of essential programs and the loss of vital infrastructure.
- **Uphold humanitarian principles**, ensuring aid is based on need rather than political agendas.
- **Build a more resilient aid system**, using this crisis as a lesson to strengthen future responses.

Together, We Must Act Now

Health is a fundamental human right, and a well-supported international aid system is crucial to upholding dignity, peace, and stability worldwide. The achievements of global solidarity must not be undone by short-term policy decisions. Now is the time for leaders to reaffirm their commitment to humanitarian principles and ensure that life-saving programs continue to serve those in need.