

BRAD R. WENSTRUP, D.P.M.
2ND DISTRICT OHIO

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND
MEANS

PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
CHAIRMAN

WWW.WENSTRUP.HOUSE.GOV



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

2335 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3164

170 NORTH MAIN STREET
PEEBLES, OH 45660
(513) 605-1380

4350 AICHOLTZ ROAD
SUITE 110
CINCINNATI, OH 45245
(513) 474-7777

475 WESTERN AVE SUITE B
CHILlicothe, OH 45601
(740) 672-7040

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
United States Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

We write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a review of all funding from the United States Government to the World Health Organization (WHO), both assessed and voluntary contributions, and report back to this Committee by July 19, 2024.

According to a 2020 report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the U.S. is the largest contributor to WHO, assessed approximately 22 percent of the organization's core budget, which amounted to just over \$122 million in FY2020.¹ While Congress appropriates WHO assessed funds through the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account in the annual State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies appropriations acts, the amount is an estimated lump sum to be used for all obligations to international organizations. As a result, the Executive Branch has wide flexibility to decide if and how these funds are dispersed among the organizations under CIO.

The U.S. also provides voluntary contributions to WHO for specific activities of interest. Voluntary contributions to WHO are appropriated by Congress through several accounts, including USAID's Global Health Programs and International Disaster Assistance accounts, HHS's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global Health account, and the State Department's Migration and Refugees account. CRS notes that while U.S. voluntary funding levels to WHO vary from year to year, funding averaged \$254 million annually between FY2012 and FY2018. This is more than double the assessed contributions in FY2020, and yet it is far less clear how the Executive Branch determines how the funds are allocated to WHO and whether they align with U.S. policy priorities.

Due to the lack of clarity on total assessed and voluntary contributions to WHO, and the scarcity of information about the rationale for contributions, it is difficult for Congress to assess the impact of these funds. This missing oversight lessens the ability of lawmakers to make informed

¹ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11369>

decisions about how to best utilize government resources and to understand whether contributions to WHO are perhaps intentionally or unintentionally creating policy space with U.S. interests and government goals.

We therefore request that GAO answer the following questions:

- For fiscal years FY2010 through FY2024, what were the total assessed contributions and total voluntary contributions of the U.S. Government to WHO? Please provide the appropriations bills and specific accounts through which these contributions were funded.
- For fiscal years FY2010 through FY2024, what criteria did the Executive Branch follow to determine how voluntary contributions provided to WHO through various accounts would be used by the organization? Further, what specific U.S. policy priority or priorities did each voluntary contribution address and how was this communicated to WHO?
- Do agencies have processes or policies in place to ensure that assessed and voluntary contributions do not intentionally or unintentionally harm U.S. interests? Is there an assessment of the impact of funding and whether it positively or negatively impacts U.S. government agency efforts, U.S. private sector stakeholders, U.S. consumers or any other stakeholders potentially affected by WHO research, decision-making and policy recommendations?

We request that GAO provide Congress with a report addressing these questions and other items deemed relevant by GAO no later than July 19, 2024. While GAO develops the report, we request that GAO provide an interim briefing to the signatories of this letter within 90 days of receipt of this request.

Thank you for your attention to this request. For questions, please contact me at 202-226-4468.

Sincerely,



Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress