

Two articles - US Contribution to Global Fund and Bill Steiger on State Need for more staff on aid. By Anna Gawel, *Devex Newswire*, 24 Nov 2025

Promising Prognosis?

On the one hand, the [Global Fund](#) reached **\$11.34 billion of its \$18 billion target** — on its face, a clear disappointment. On the other hand, [the U.S. pledged \\$4.6 billion](#), down from the \$6 billion committed during the last funding cycle.

Ostensibly, that should count as a loss as well, but with the Trump administration's penchant for, well, penny-pinching on foreign aid and disdain of multilateralism, the pledge was actually a pleasant surprise. It even means the U.S. remains the fund's largest donor.

Jeremy Lewin of the [U.S. State Department](#) noted the “modest decline” was to “account for needed reforms and efficiencies,” but also praised the organization's track record and the role he expects it will play in America's new vision of global health, my colleague Sara Jerving writes.

“The best days of America's health care leadership are yet ahead,” he declared, calling the Global Fund a “critical partner” in the new [“America First Global Health Strategy,”](#) which “enacts much-needed reforms to bloated programs, deploying resources more prudently towards high-impact programs, and creating positive incentives for recipient countries' self-reliance and local control.”

In its last three-year replenishment in 2022, the fund raised a record-breaking \$15.7 billion.

But now it's not just the U.S.: **Pledges from other donors such as Germany and the United Kingdom were down.** Some countries also haven't yet pledged, so a final tally isn't expected until early next year.

That's got some observers dour despite the fact that fears the U.S. wouldn't pledge a dime didn't come to pass.

“The results of the Summit point towards a budget gap for the Global Fund over the next three years. But the warning signs were flashing long before, as **nearly all its major donors have slashed their aid budgets,**” says **Janeen Madan Keller** of the [Center for Global Development](#). “The reality is that the Global Fund is staring down an era of austerity. **It must make tough cost-cutting decisions** if it is to stand any chance of ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.”

Read: [Global Fund raised \\$11.34 billion with a surprising US pledge](#)

He's just a Bill

Take note of Lewin's praise of the Global Fund. It came laced with the swipe that global health programs are too bloated and create too much dependency on aid — hence, in the Trump administration's summation, the beauty of the “America First” health strategy.

That sentiment was similar to what **William “Bill” Steiger**, former [USAID](#) chief of staff in the first Trump administration, [expressed at a U.S. Global Leadership Coalition event](#) in Congress last week, attended by my colleague Adva Saldinger.

“The most important innovation that is in the ‘America First Global Health Strategy’ is asking other countries, other governments, and their partners to do their share,” he said. “The criticism of the administration is correct that we have allowed some of our partners to free ride off of our investments for far too long, and it is time for them to step up. But they need help.”

Now take note of that last bit — “they need help.” It suggests **a softer stance than some current Trump officials**. Bolstering that theory is the fact that he called on Congress to reauthorize the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS](#), or PEPFAR, and the [President's Malaria Initiative](#).

He also hinted that the State Department, gutted by layoffs, could use some reinforcements, **recommending a working capital fund at the agency** that would allow it to use program dollars to bring in additional staff.

“There are simply not enough people working on assistance in the State Department, and the State Department is clearly not going to spend its administrative dollars on hiring more people. A working capital fund **would allow them to use program dollars**, of which there are a lot more, to help support that effort within guidelines,” he said.