



The WHO Council
on the Economics of
Health for All

Health for All – transforming economies to deliver what matters

Final report of the WHO Council
on the Economics of Health for All

Executive summary



World Health
Organization

© **World Health Organization 2024**. Some rights reserved.
This work is available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence.

Suggested citation. WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All. Health for All – transforming economies to deliver what matters: final report of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All. Executive summary. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2471/Bo9056>

General disclaimers. This publication contains the collective views of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All (an international group of experts) and does not necessarily represent the decisions or the policies of WHO.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization or the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization or the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization and the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization or the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All be liable for damages arising from its use.

**» Health is a fundamental
human right and the time has
now come to redirect and reshape
the economy to deliver
on the goal of Health for All. «**

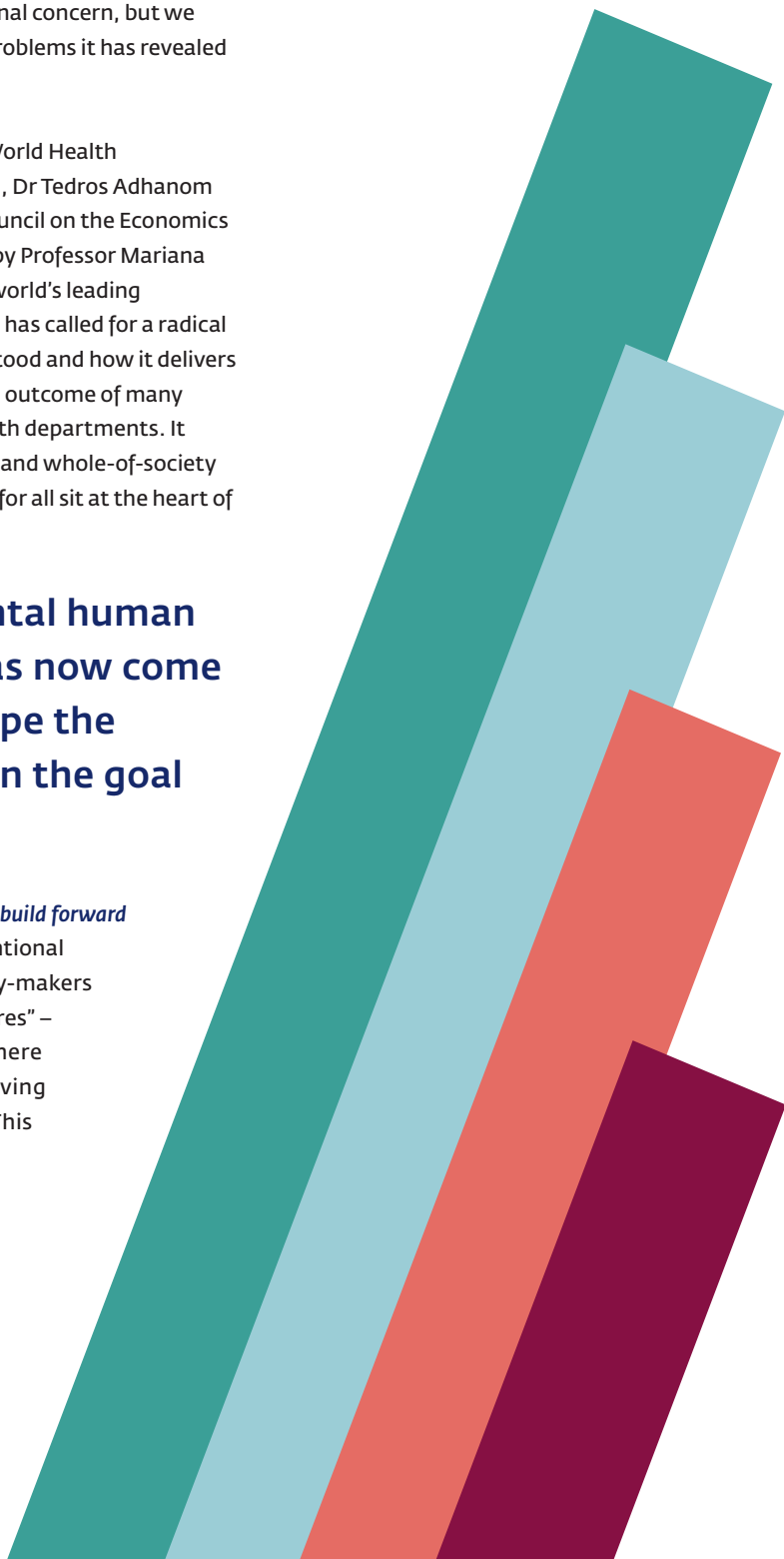
Executive summary

As of May 2023, COVID-19 may no longer be classified as a public health emergency of international concern, but we must not ignore the deep structural problems it has revealed in our economy.

As part of a global response, in 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus announced an expert Council on the Economics of Health for All. The Council, chaired by Professor Mariana Mazzucato, and made up of 10 of the world's leading economists and public health experts, has called for a radical change in how the economy is understood and how it delivers for people and planet. Wellbeing is the outcome of many different factors—it is not just for health departments. It thus requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Only in this way can health for all sit at the heart of our social and economic systems.

» Health is a fundamental human right and the time has now come to redirect and reshape the economy to deliver on the goal of Health for All. «

Given how much is at stake, we must *build forward better* to deliver Health for All. Conventional economic theory has convinced policy-makers that at best they can fix “market failures” – investing public money only when there is not enough private money but leaving the direction to the private sector. This approach risks categorising health as a short-term cost when in fact it is a long-term investment. Policy-makers must co-create and shape an economy that delivers on goals that are critical to human and planetary wellbeing. This requires collective intelligence, collaboration and a focus on society wide outcomes.



To build a new frame for action, the Council has worked across four fundamental pillars, each with an in-depth brief (written during 2021 and 2022 and available on our [website](#)).

➤ Valuing Health for All

Measure and value what matters for people and planet. Valuing Health for All means we need to value and measure the things that truly matter – human and planetary flourishing – rather than pursuing economic growth and GDP maximization regardless of the consequences.

In the Council's final report, these four pillars have given inspiration to 13 bold recommendations. They offer guidance on how to structure new economic thinking and new economic practice for governments working with industry and civil society to achieve outcomes for Health for All.

Health and the economy are interdependent. Global and national economic trends influence our environment, working practices, food and educational opportunities, all of which are crucial determinants of health. Public and private investments and collaboration must therefore be purposed to build an economy that is conducive to health and wellbeing, achieving local, national and supranational goals.

➤ Financing Health for All

Expand rather than contract fiscal space to ensure long-term and better-quality finance for health. A fundamental overhaul of national and international systems for financing health is needed, requiring both more money, and higher quality financing.

➤ Innovating for Health for All

Redesign the patent system and the relationship between public and private.

Unless innovation in health systems – from biotech to digitalization – is governed for the common good, too many people remain excluded from its benefits.

➤ Strengthening public sector capacity for Health for All

Build public sector capacity with a whole-of-government approach. As Covid-19 made clear, the quality and competence of government matters. Re-investing in state capacity is crucial to delivering Health for All.

**Our 13 bold
recommendations**



Our 13 bold recommendations

01

Valuing Health for All

Valuing the essential

Treat health and wellbeing, health workers and health systems as a long-term investment, not a short-term cost.

02

Human rights

Use legal and financial commitments to enforce health as a human right.

03

Planetary health

Restore and protect the environment by upholding international commitments to a regenerative economy which links planet and people.

04

Dashboard for a healthy economy

Use a range of metrics that track progress across core societal values, above and beyond the narrow, static measure of GDP.

Financing Health for All

05

Long-term finance

Adopt a comprehensive, stable approach to funding Health for All.

06

Quality of finance

Redraw the international architecture of finance to fund health equitably and proactively, including an effective and inclusive crisis response.

07

Funding and governance of WHO

Ensure WHO is properly funded and governed to play its key global coordinating role in Health for All.

Innovating for Health for All

08

Collective intelligence

Build symbiotic public-private alliances to maximize public value, sharing both risk and rewards.

09

Common good

Design knowledge governance, including intellectual property regimes, for the common good to ensure global equitable access to vital health innovations.

10

Outcomes orientation

Align innovation and industrial strategies with bold cross-sectoral missions to deliver Health for All

Strengthening public capacity for Health for All

11

Whole-of-government

Recognize that Health for All is not just for health ministries but for all government agencies.

12

State capacity

Invest in the dynamic capabilities of the public sector, institutionalizing experimentation and learning, to lead effectively in delivering Health for All.

13

Build trust

Demonstrate transparency and meaningful public engagement to hold governments accountable for the common good.

Council members

Professor Mariana Mazzucato (Chair)

Professor of the Economics of Innovation and Public Value and Founding Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University College London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Professor Senait Fisseha

Globally recognized leader in reproductive health and rights, Director of Global Programs at the Susan T Buffett Foundation and adjunct faculty at the University of Michigan, United States of America

Professor Jayati Ghosh

Taught economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, and is now Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, United States of America

Vanessa Huang

Specialist in health care and investment banking, and is currently a General Partner at BVCF Management Ltd., Hong Kong SAR, China

Professor Stephanie Kelton

Leading expert on Modern Monetary Theory and Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Stony Brook University, United States of America

Professor Ilona Kickbusch

Founding Director and Chair of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Switzerland

Zélia Maria Profeta da Luz

Public health researcher and former Director of the Instituto René Rachou - Fiocruz Minas, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation from July 2012 to June 2021, Brazil

Kate Raworth

Creator of the Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries and is a Senior Associate at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute, United Kingdom

Dr Vera Songwe

Chair of the Liquidity and Sustainability Facility, London, United Kingdom, Co-Chair of the High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance and Non-Resident Fellow, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., United States of America

Dame Marilyn Waring

Former parliamentarian, feminist economist and Professor Emeritus of Public Policy at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

WHO Secretariat

Dr Ritu Sadana

Head, WHO Secretariat for the Council on the Economics of Health for All, Switzerland

Research team: Dr Devika Dutt, Dr Roberto Duran Fernandez, Alberto Huitron, Dr Şerife Genç İleri, Dr Maksym Obrizan

Gregory Hartl, Communications
Erica Lefstad, Design
Brendan Maton, Editor
Diana Ntrel, Administrative Assistant

The World Health Organization and the Council on the Economics of Health for All acknowledges financial support from the Government of Finland enabling the Council's research activities and stakeholder engagements.

For further information contact

EH4A-Secretariat@who.int

www.who.int/groups/who-council-on-the-economics-of-health-for-all