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COMMENTARY

Global health initiatives: opportunities or challenges?

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Global health initiatives

In response to the 2000 global commitment towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, there were significant increases in global funding for disease-specific interventions, in particular HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as TB and malaria. These increases in financial resources demonstrated a moral commitment and a sense of urgency to halt deaths from these major diseases.

Three global HIV/AIDS initiatives contribute most of the direct external funding to resource-poor countries for scaling up HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. These are the World Bank Global HIV/AIDS Program including the Multi-country AIDS Program (MAP); the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) has contributed significantly to scaling up routine immunization coverage while also introducing hepatitis B and *Haemophilus influenzae*

B vaccines, and recently pneumococcal conjugated and rotavirus vaccines.

This commentary identifies opportunities and challenges posed by these global health initiatives (GHIs). It discusses and recommends how to maximize opportunities and minimize risks to the sustainability of national priority health programmes in the longer term beyond the funding.

Opportunities

A GHI furnishes a number of opportunities. It claims to promote transparency and accountability among recipient countries, for example through pay for performance mechanisms. It increases coverage and access through scaling up of cost-effective interventions when more financial resources are available. The claim that GHI contributes to health system strengthening is controversial; strong health systems are the prerequisite for successful GHI implementation. Some G such as GAVI and the Global Fund started to provide