

April 17, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the undersigned groups representing millions of taxpayers across the country, we commend you for your much-needed cuts to the United Nations budget. However, further action needs to be taken to protect U.S. taxpayers against intergovernmental organizations misusing our tax dollars through wasteful spending abuses and lobbying for policies against US interests. As such, we urge you to immediately take further action against these practices and cut U.S. Government funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) by 25 percent. The repeated, gross abuse of taxpayer funds, coupled with WHO actions taken against U.S. interests, makes funding at current levels for the organization unwise and untenable. Limiting the financial support of the U.S. to the WHO will place much-needed pressure on the UN and WHO to cease their misguided, ideological campaigns that do not espouse U.S. values.

We recommend funding remain limited until wholesale reform of the WHO is achieved and the organization returns to its core principles.

Unfortunately, wasteful spending at the WHO continues to be the norm. Examples of the extravagant behavior by the organization include:

- The WHO spends \$200 million a year on travel — far more than what it spends on fighting Hepatitis, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria *combined*¹.
- Former WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan was known for frequently flying first class and staying in luxury hotels. In one instance she stayed in the biggest presidential suite at the Palm Camayenne hotel in Conakry, Guinea. The suite has an advertised price of more than \$1,000 a night.
- The WHO spends on average \$28,500 per employee per year on travel. In contrast, Doctors Without Borders spends just \$1,162 per employee per year.
- Leaked emails reveal that WHO leadership refused to call the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a public health emergency for months for political reasons², while prioritizing resources to promoting an anti-vaping conference in Moscow costing thousands of lives in the process³. As doctors working on the ground “couldn’t even afford basics like protective boots, gloves and soap,” Dr. Bruce Aylward (head of WHO’s outbreak

¹ <https://www.statnews.com/2017/05/21/who-spends-on-travel/>

² <http://www.businessinsider.com/report-the-world-health-organization-resisted-declaring-ebola-an-international-emergency-for-economic-reasons-2015-3>

³ <https://health.spectator.co.uk/e-cigarettes-who-ebola-lost-plot/>

response team) racked up nearly \$400,000 in travel expenses in West Africa frequently demanding to fly by helicopter and refusing to travel by jeep. When WHO did send staffers to address the Ebola pandemic “fellow responders said many lacked Ebola experience; one WHO consultant infected with Ebola broke the agency’s protocol, putting others at risk and was kicked out of the WHO hotel⁴.

In addition to spending scandals, the WHO has become unaccountable, non-transparent, and working against U.S. interests:

- In a scandal that is currently being investigated by the US House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space and Technology⁵, the World Health Organization’s cancer agency edited out findings from a draft of its review of the weed killer glyphosate because the evidence conflicted with the political agenda of the WHO⁶.
- The WHO refuses to let the media, watchdog groups, and members of the public witness their meetings. Doors are blocked by armed security guards physically removing journalists who wanted to observe proceedings⁷.
- The WHO has a history of praising and supporting dictators and anti-American regimes. This includes making genocidal tyrant Robert Mugabe a goodwill ambassador and thinking that North Korea, where more than 3 million people starved to death in the 1990’s⁸, 200,00 children are suffering from severe malnutrition and fears a new famine risks as many as 18 million lives⁹, has a healthcare system worthy of praise for keeping obesity under control¹⁰. The WHO has also praised Cuba for being an “example to the world.”¹¹
- The WHO continues to use taxpayer funds to try to force governments to put failed policies in place. WHO antiquated ideas include the elimination of all branding from products like infant formula (to encourage breast-feeding by new mothers) and cigarettes (to discourage smoking). Such policies shame citizens and do not work. In Australia and France, where WHO generate policies are in place, the number of smokers in each country has increased for the first time in decades¹²¹³.

⁴ <http://www.businessinsider.com/report-the-world-health-organization-resisted-declaring-ebola-an-international-emergency-for-economic-reasons-2015-3>

⁵ <https://science.house.gov/legislation/hearings/full-committee-hearing-defense-scientific-integrity-examining-iarc-monograph>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/who-iarc-glyphosate/>

⁷ <http://dailycaller.com/2016/11/10/the-un-kicked-me-out-of-its-meeting-on-tobacco-rules-why-i-took-a-stand-for-press-freedom/>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korean_famine

⁹ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/877007/North-Korea-news-drought-Kim-Jong-un-nuclear-war-weapons-North-Korea-latest>

¹⁰ <http://reason.com/blog/2010/05/07/who-chief-announces-the-good-n>

¹¹ <http://www.tercerainformacion.es/antigua/spip.php?article71126>

¹² <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/more-smokers-lighting-up-despite-everincreasing-taxes/news-story/190014e7306548c49fc372dabb5a0555?login=1>

¹³ <https://www.ofdt.fr/ofdt/fr/tt171225.pdf>

- In 2016 at the height of the Syrian civil war, where hundreds of thousands of people had died and millions were fleeing, the World Health Organisation told Syria to focus on ... plain packaging of cigarettes¹⁴.
- Listing playing video games as a disease in the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases¹⁵
- The WHO has failed to recognize technological innovation can reduce the harm associated with smoking cigarettes, despite a growing body of evidence suggesting new technologies can have a dramatic impact on public health.
- The WHO pushes governments to promote sin taxes on products that contain sugar despite policy failures in Denmark¹⁶, Mexico¹⁷, and Chicago¹⁸.
- The WHO placed bacon and hot dogs in the same category of cancer-risks as smoking cigarettes, with all red meat just one category behind¹⁹ amidst growing international calls for a worldwide “sin tax” on red meat²⁰.
- In 2016, the WHO adopted the ideological and anti-business “FENSA” approach discouraging partnering with private sector companies and organizations coupled with numerous items on meeting agendas attacking the private sector as a problem and discouraging attempts to work with the sector for solutions. This would be a violation of the first amendment in the United States where all parties should have a voice in the policy process. Unfortunately, the WHO and the UN do not share this view.
- The WHO also approaches the issue of global access to medicine inappropriately by casting innovation and intellectual property as the main barriers to increased access to medicines. The WHO further refuses to discuss or try to address the fundamental root causes of this issue which include insufficient investment in the health resources, a lack of trained health personnel, and the lack of cold storage needed to get medicines to patients.

As President, you have called out the waste, bias, and mismanagement at the United Nations and called for the reduction in U.S. taxpayer contributions to the UN. We call upon you to similarly act to stop WHO waste and mismanagement in its tracks.

¹⁴ <http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-amid-war-un-warns-syrians-smoking-is-a-grave-health-risk-2016-6?IR=T>

¹⁵ <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-addictive-gaming-recognised-disease.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.iea.org.uk/publications/research/the-proof-of-the-pudding-denmark%E2%80%99s-fat-tax-fiasco>

¹⁷ <https://health.spectator.co.uk/mexico-was-meant-to-prove-a-sugar-tax-worked-new-figures-tell-a-different-story/>

¹⁸ <https://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2017/10/fizzled-0>

¹⁹ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/10/26/451211964/bad-day-for-bacon-processed-red-meats-cause-cancer-says-who>

²⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelpellmanrowland/2017/12/15/meat-tax/>

Poor financial stewardship, including the funneling of funds away from healthcare towards lobbying governments to adopt anti-business, anti-intellectual property, and anti-taxpayers interests should never be rewarded. As an alternative to the failed status-quo, aid work should either be undertaken directly by the State Department or through funding of NGOs with proper oversight. In the absence of structural reforms that requires WHO to focus on its core missions, U.S. funding of the WHO at current levels cannot and should not continue.

We welcome your leadership and stand ready to help your efforts to defend American taxpayers.

Sincerely,

David Williams
President
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

CC: National Security Advisor John Bolton, UN Ambassador Nicky Haley, HHS Secretary Alex Azar