

GLN Focal Points Convene to Advance Health Financing and Advocacy for Women, Children, and Adolescents

The Global Leaders Network (GLN) for Women's, Children's, and Adolescents' Health (WCAH) convened its fourth focal points meeting, bringing together senior representatives from the health and finance ministries of member countries: Denmark, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, and Tanzania. Building on previous discussions, the meeting focused on advancing innovative financing mechanisms, strengthening domestic resource mobilisation, and coordinating advocacy efforts to elevate WCAH as a priority in global and regional forums—including the upcoming United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York this September and the G20 Summit in South Africa in November.

Rajat Khosla, Executive Director of PMNCH, opened the meeting with a stark assessment of the global health financing landscape. Recent [reports](#) highlight the devastating consequences of abrupt aid cuts, for instance in East Africa, where reduced access to essential medication has led to a rise in unsafe abortions and paediatric HIV infections. A Lancet projection estimates up to [14 million](#) additional deaths by 2030, including 4.5 million children under five, as a result of the USAID shutdown—an alarming figure that reflects the scale of the crisis. These figures underscore the urgency of sustained investment and coordinated action, as programme closures disproportionately impact women, children, and adolescents.

"We are now, in less than six months, starting to see the tangible impact of funding cuts... often at the cost of women, children, and adolescent health." — **Rajat Khosla Executive Director of PMNCH**

Participants also highlighted growing challenges in conflict zones where already limited resources and overstretched health systems make them particularly vulnerable. In 2020, the maternal mortality ratio in conflict zones was more than twice the global average. In 2020, the maternal mortality ratio in these settings was more than twice the global average. By 2023, fragile and crisis-affected countries accounted for [61%](#) of global maternal deaths, despite representing only 25% of global births.

Despite ongoing challenges, GLN countries reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening health systems for maternal, newborn, and adolescent health, and expressed collective support for public-private partnerships to drive domestic resource mobilisation. Discussions emphasised the need for intensified and coordinated efforts, particularly in settings where systemic vulnerabilities and fiscal constraints continue to hinder progress.

Member countries shared encouraging updates on national strategies to improve domestic resource mobilization for health. These included the establishment of dedicated health funds, the implementation of earmarked taxes, and the development of public-private partnerships. These efforts reflect a growing recognition that sustainable progress requires multisectoral collaboration. By engaging the private sector, countries aim to scale proven health solutions and extend quality services to underserved communities.

Nigeria's Ministry of Finance reiterated this approach, stating:

"We recognise that government alone cannot meet all the health needs of our people. By working hand in hand with the private sector, we can mobilise resources, scale proven solutions, and deliver quality health services that reach even the most underserved communities. Our goal is to create an enabling environment where partnerships flourish, investments are impactful, and every naira spent delivers value for Nigerians." **Mr. Yusuf Mohammed — Nigeria Director of Expenditure**

Malawi also shared significant progress on its national health financing strategy, highlighting a multi-pronged approach to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and reduce dependency on external aid.

"We are establishing a health fund so that all the money collected from taxes goes directly to health." — **Emily Chirwa, Deputy Director of Planning and Policy at Ministry Of Health Malawi**

Somalia, a country significantly impacted by reductions in official development assistance (ODA)—particularly in child healthcare, where cases of infectious diseases have [doubled](#) since mid-April due to the closure of hundreds of health clinics—has begun exploring innovative domestic resource mobilisation strategies. These include the introduction of sin taxes on tobacco and alcohol, with plans to earmark the resulting revenues specifically for health services. This represents a notable shift from previous practices, where such revenues were absorbed into general government accounts. In parallel, Somalia is also strengthening public-private partnerships, recognising that the private sector currently delivers over 60% of the country's health services.

The convening concluded with a shared commitment to advance actionable steps to implement innovative financing mechanisms that safeguard progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals for women's, children's, and adolescents' health.

About the Global Leaders Network

Initiated in 2023, the Global Leaders Network is the first and only Global South-led global health diplomacy initiative to support the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals related to women, children, and adolescents. The GLN is creating a pathway towards the reduction of maternal, neonatal, and adolescent mortality rates by a third in network countries by 2030.