

**** REVISED ** WHO/PAHO STATEMENT FOR ID2**

Enhancing Critical Forms of Financing and Aid Effectiveness Through Collaborative Partnerships: A Conversation

Delivery time: around 2:40 mins (maximum 3 mins)

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

WHO welcomes this timely and critical discussion.

Small island developing States face significant health challenges, including high burdens of non-communicable diseases and mental health conditions, and increased vulnerability to health emergencies and the impacts of climate change.

This unfair health burden on SIDS is further heightened by the high costs of health services and a lack of prioritization of addressing the social determinants of health.

In order to deliver on the “Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS”, there is a critical need to examine the availability of financing for health programmes, and to make sure that these are not only available during times of crises, but can be leveraged in a sustainable manner.

To ensure a successful next decade of action for SIDS, we must all step up and strengthen health systems, in order to achieve universal health coverage, with primary health care at its foundation.

At present, due to the high costs and punitive terms of borrowing, many SIDS are unable to provide affordable and quality health care, or duly invest in the health of their populations.

We find this to be unacceptable.

Not least because the human consequences of ill-health, premature disability and death are all preventable.

Improved access to international development assistance and affordable concessional financing will be essential for SIDS to make catalytic investments in health and to accelerate progress towards the health-related SDGs.

We also urge partners to find innovative mechanisms and solutions, such as debt-for-health swaps.

In this context, we urge you to consider the recommendations of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All.

The Council has developed a new economic narrative that transforms financing for health from *expenditure* to *investment*, guided by the principle that health is a fundamental social goal - one that is critical to the resilience and stability of economies worldwide.

Excellencies,

It is time for urgent action to release financing for SIDS to allow them to invest in health and meet their development needs.

It is our moral imperative to act swiftly and decisively, to forge a path forward based on equity, resilience, and sustainability.

I thank you.