

Position paper on global health policy for the election of the 21st German Bundestag and the future Federal Government Steering Committee of the Global Health Hub Germany¹

Germany has recognised its leading role in the international health system with its Global Health Strategy and thus-associated engagement. This strategy represents a strong commitment to SDG 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, as well as to the values of global responsibility, cooperation and sustainability. To further advance the global health agenda and achieve sustainable improvements in healthcare worldwide, the political parties should emphasise the following measures and priorities in their election programmes and the future German government in its coalition agreement. The following recommendations are based on the priorities of the German global health strategy.

Germany as a global health partner: taking responsibility.

As an economically strong country and a leading location for research and innovation, Germany must play a key role in global health policy, especially in times of limited financial resources, growing needs and geopolitical uncertainty. The German government should increasingly advocate for a human rights-based and equitable health policy across all departments and within the EU, and further advocate for the improvement and sustainable financing of global health in international bodies such as the G7/20. Strong policy coherence is essential to ensure that all political measures contribute to the global health goals and reinforce each other. Germany should also play an active role in supporting and further developing the World Health Organization (WHO) and multilateral financing mechanisms such as *Gavi*, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund and research funding instruments such as the *Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations* (CEPI) and the *Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership* (GARDP). Germany's specific strengths in research and innovation must be utilised to a greater extent and internationally networked projects that address neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), new infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health and the fight against antibiotic resistance must be promoted. Furthermore, Germany must take a clear stance against the curtailment of civil society spaces and intensively involve civil society in international health processes in the sense of *meaningful participation*. The prerequisite for this is a sustainable and long-term strengthening of exchange formats and platforms that deepen the interdisciplinary and intersectoral exchange on global health, such as the *Global Health Hub Germany* or the *German Alliance for Global Health Research* (GLOHRA).

Promote health, prevent disease and respond appropriately.

SDG3 calls for the global promotion of health and the prevention of disease. Comprehensive political and financial measures are required to achieve this goal. Germany should therefore continue to work towards providing at least 0.1% of its gross domestic product for global health financing. It is particularly important to address the threats posed by climate change, new pandemics, antimicrobial resistance and NCDs as urgent health problems. In particular, priority should be given to programmes that are designed to be sustainable, have a high impact and scalability and are based on solid evidence to improve global health. Measures that save a particularly large number of lives include strengthening universal access to primary healthcare and promoting maternal and child health. Particularly in this field, Germany should provide support with adequate funding and political commitment. Promoting research into new antimicrobial agents and strengthening international cooperation on pandemic preparedness should also be key political goals for Germany. Vaccinations play a key role in the prevention and control of infectious diseases, make a decisive contribution to pandemic preparedness and help to reduce antibiotic use and thus AMR by preventing secondary bacterial infections. At the same time, the prevention of non-communicable diseases, including the promotion of mental health, needs to be placed more central to the health strategy. Germany should also continue its leading role in the fight against neglected tropical diseases.

A holistic approach to the environment, climate change and health.

Climate change has direct and indirect effects on physical and mental health. For example, it is changing the distribution patterns of diseases such as malaria and dengue, affecting regions that were previously considered safe. It is particularly important to emphasise the need to strengthen the resilience of health systems to the effects of climate change and to pursue an inclusive approach that focuses particularly

¹ Stakeholder Groups: International Organisations, Youth, Foundations, Think Tanks, Private Sector, Academia, Civil Society

on vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. It is essential that health systems and prevention programmes, such as vaccination programmes, can respond flexibly to these new challenges. At the same time, health systems and health programmes should integrate climate protection measures. In Germany, a binding national strategy for climate protection in the healthcare sector would be essential. In the sense of a *Health-in-all-Policies* -approach, cross-sectoral cooperation should be strengthened both in Germany and internationally to create synergies between relevant sectors for climate and health policy. Health expertise must be actively incorporated into climate debates and activities; at the same time, the German government should work to ensure that international agreements and commitments are implemented both globally and in Germany.

Sustainably strengthening healthcare systems worldwide.

In its bilateral and multilateral work, Germany should continue to work towards ensuring that all people have non-discriminatory and universal access to healthcare services of an appropriate quality, particularly in the poorest regions of the world. This also includes promoting access to vaccines and medicines, which are essential for combating and containing highly contagious, potentially pandemic-causing pathogens and other health crises. The health of women and their sexual and reproductive rights and health system strengthening are closely interlinked and influence each other. Investing in women's health not only contributes to individual health and well-being, but also strengthens the resilience of their communities. Especially in the least developed countries, sustainable investments and partnerships must contribute to the development of infrastructure. An important step here is the promotion of measures to combat the global shortage of health personnel and the support of measures for the local production of medicines and vaccines. Harmonising approval procedures could help to secure the supply of medicines in times of crisis.

Health protection in times of cross-border and cross-sectoral health threats.

Pandemics and other cross-border health threats make international cooperation and robust pandemic preparedness essential. Climate change poses the greatest threat to human health and makes the occurrence of epidemics and pandemics more likely. Germany should continue to support the WHO and the Pandemic Fund and continue to campaign for the conclusion of an international Pandemic Agreement. The Federal Government's commitment to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response must be further expanded in Germany and at international level in line with the *One Health* approach, which emphasises the connection between human health, animal health and the environment. This will enable health risks to be addressed jointly from ecological, civilisational and epidemiological perspectives.

Research, innovation and digitalisation for global health.

Research and innovation are key components for improving global health. Germany should further expand its leading role as a centre of innovation and create long-term funding structures for global health research. In particular, the development of new vaccines, drugs against tropical diseases and antimicrobial agents as well as the prevention of pandemics should be promoted more strongly. Global access to medical innovations must be guaranteed in order to provide all people worldwide with equal access to advanced healthcare. The promotion of local production, in particular the production of vaccines on the African continent, should also be further expanded in order to strengthen regional security of supply. The digitalisation of the healthcare system must be consistently driven forward. Digital solutions such as telemedicine and artificial intelligence can revolutionise access to healthcare by making processes more efficient, making specialist knowledge available worldwide and offering individually tailored solutions. The pandemic has made it clear what opportunities digitalisation offers, but also how much still needs to be done.

Promoting innovative mechanisms for financing global health.

In view of limited resources, innovative financing mechanisms such as *Debt2Health*, the International Finance Facility for Vaccines (*IFFIm*) and product development partnerships must be given greater focus in order to secure sustainable financing for global health initiatives. Germany has successfully engaged in *Debt2Health*; partnerships with the private sector can provide additional innovation, technology and funding. Joint initiatives between governments, international organisations and the private sector should be promoted to create synergies that go beyond traditional financing approaches and increase the effectiveness and reach of global health programmes.