

WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MODEL UNITED NATIONS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNITED NATIONS FUNDING CRISIS

DECEMBER 17, 2025

Focus:

Students will try to find a working solution to the funding crisis that is being faced by the United Nations.

Background:

When Donald Trump took office for a second term, he promised to cut fraud, waste and abuse from government spending. One action he took in February of 2025 was to cut the funding the United States provided to USAID, the US Agency for International Development. The actual reduction in spending was estimated at \$60 billion in US assistance around the world, or approximately 90% of its foreign contracts.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/26/trump-administration-says-its-cutting-90-of-usaid-foreign-aid-contracts-00206377>

The reduction in US spending did not end with the administration's decision to reduce funding for USAID. The Trump administration has withdrawn from the World Health Organization which represents a total of \$260 million in membership fees.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/no-talks-between-who-and-us-despite-severe-disruption-in-health-services-since-trump-slashed-aid/>

The decision to end the US contributions to USAID and to the WHO runs the risk of putting lives at risk, advancing the outbreak of disease, destabilizing global health, reducing effective migration strategies, and increasing the possibilities of global conflict.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-trumps-rescission-request-would-slash-spending-on-foreign-assistance-programs-that-benefit-american-interests/>

Trump's decision to remove international funding, however, does not end with the defunding of USAID and the WHO. The US has decided to effectively hamstring the United Nations itself with a \$1 billion cut in financial contributions and a further cut of \$1 billion as appropriated by the US Congress. It would further cut \$1 billion in peacekeeping contributions and a further cut in voluntary contributions of \$1.2 billion. The total cut to UN funding would exceed \$4 billion.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-trump-administrations-retreat-from-the-united-nations-harms-the-american-people/>

The elimination of US funding to the institutions has had a domino effect. To date, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Comoros, Dominica, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Venezuela and Yemen have withheld funding from the WHO.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/no-talks-between-who-and-us-despite-severe-disruption-in-health-services-since-trump-slashed-aid/> and the following countries have fallen behind in their payments to the United Nations: China, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and

Venezuela.

<https://www.cfr.org/article/funding-united-nations-what-impact-do-us-contributions-have-un-agencies-and-programs>

Cuts to foreign aid projects have been so devastating that Bill Gates, surprisingly recommended cuts to climate change initiatives in order to support health and development initiatives that he says are more pressing.

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/work/accelerate-energy-innovation/reader/helping-the-worlds-poorest-adapt-to-climate-change>

One complaint from Trump is that the United States unfairly pays a disproportionate amount toward the UN budget. In 2025, the US is responsible for 225 of the UN regular budget and 26% of the UN peacekeeping budget.

<https://www.cfr.org/article/funding-united-nations-what-impact-do-us-contributions-have-un-agencies-and-programs>

However, the percentage that a country is obligated to pay to the UN is based on a formula that considers a country's gross national income, debt burden and population.

<https://www.cfr.org/article/funding-united-nations-what-impact-do-us-contributions-have-un-agencies-and-programs>

When these factors are taken into consideration, the top 10 country assessments are as follows:

U.S. and China are charged the highest dues for the United Nations' 2 main budgets

Top 10 assessments for the UN's regular and peacekeeping budgets, 2025 (amount in U.S. dollars)

Regular budget			Peacekeeping budget		
ASSESSMENT			ASSESSMENT		
	RATE	AMOUNT		RATE	AMOUNT
U.S.	22.000%	\$820,385,984	U.S.	26.158%	\$6,539,598
China	20.004	679,786,970	China	23.785	5,946,278
Japan	6.930	235,499,085	Japan	6.930	1,732,500
Germany	5.692	193,428,686	Germany	5.692	1,423,000
UK	3.991	135,624,366	UK	4.745	1,186,343
France	3.858	131,104,685	France	4.587	1,146,808
Italy	2.813	95,592,919	Italy	2.813	703,250
Canada	2.543	86,417,630	Canada	2.543	635,750
South Korea	2.349	79,825,015	Russia	2.490	622,451
Russia	2.094	71,159,464	South Korea	2.349	587,250

Note: Dollar amounts shown reflect net assessed contributions after accounting for credits from staff assessments (i.e., credits to member states that don't levy national taxes on people employed by the United Nations).

Source: United Nations Secretariat, "Assessment of member states' advances to the Working Capital Fund for 2025 and contributions to the United Nations regular budget for 2025."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As one can see, a country like Canada, with 1/10 the size of the United States in population and gross national income, pays a percentage which is in line with the contributions of the United States.

Regardless of the reasons for the US cut in funding of the UN, the effects will be devastating. It is estimated that there will be a 15% cut in UN programming.

<https://press.un.org/en/2025/gaab4505.doc.htm>

The cuts in foreign aid will affect the following:

Food Aid
Global Health
Refugees and Migrants
Women and girls
Combatting illicit drugs

The effects on specific countries include:

Food Aid

Johannesburg, South Africa Relying on U.S. funding for half of its budget, the World Food Programme has been forced to shut down its Southern Africa office due to aid cuts. In a region currently experiencing severe drought, widespread crop and livestock losses, and escalating conflict, the office's closure will limit the delivery of humanitarian aid—exacerbating food shortages and already-high rates of chronic malnutrition.

Kenya Funding cuts to the World Food Program have led to some refugees in Kenya camps receiving a 20% ration in both food assistance and cash. The lack of food has led to an increase in violence in refugee camps with August protests leaving one person dead. Food distribution has become more unsafe and several people have died in human stampedes trying to access supplies.

Sudan After the halt on U.S. foreign assistance, hundreds of American-funded soup kitchens in Sudan remain closed in a country where any aid cut can be deadly. With rates of acute child malnutrition 10 times above the emergency threshold, more than 637,000 Sudanese people are already experiencing famine conditions, with another 8 million at risk. The WHO estimates 5 million Sudanese people lost access to life-saving care due to the aid cuts in food and medical support.

Malawi Refugees in Malawi's Dzaleka camp have had their cash aid reduced by 50% of what they formerly were due to U.S. funding cuts to the World Food Programme. As a result, the WFP has reported a sharp increase in human trafficking and sexual violence in the camp. Local police have reported a 14% increase in crime following U.S. cuts.

Democratic Republic of Congo In the Democratic Republic of Congo, funding cuts, including a shortfall of \$351.7 million over the next six months, have resulted in a severe reduction in the number of people receiving food assistance. Currently, one in four people in DRC, or 28 million people, are food insecure, made worse by the conflict in the eastern part of the country. Of these, 2.3 million people face emergency conditions, though only 1 million of these people were able to receive assistance in 2025. In October, this number will go down to 600,000 people. Next year, a complete pipeline break is likely.

Somalia In Somalia, funding cuts and resulting pipeline breaks will force emergency food assistance to be cut by more than 80%. Currently, 4.4 million people face high levels of food insecurity in Somalia. Prior to U.S. funding cuts, 2.2 million Somalis received emergency food assistance. In April 2025, this number was reduced to 1.1 million, and is expected to be cut to just 350,000 following pipeline breaks caused by funding gaps.

Nigeria The UN's Humanitarian Air Service, the main lifeline for distributing aid to remote and hard to reach locations, has ceased operations in Nigeria. U.S. cuts have completely defunded operations there, forcing the grounding of all UNHAS-operated planes. This will greatly impact the nearly 7.8 million Nigerians currently in need of humanitarian assistance, particularly for those living in areas controlled by Boko Haram.

Afghanistan The U.S. has ceased funding for World Food Program activities targeting child malnutrition in Afghanistan and most emergency food aid has stopped. 9.5 million Afghans need urgent food aid and more than 3.5 million Afghan children will suffer from acute malnutrition this year, a 20% increase from 2024. Without emergency food assistance, pregnant women and families with young children will lose out on the nutrition they need.

Yemen The U.S. has terminated \$107 million in aid to Yemen, a country currently experiencing a brutal civil war. Additional funding cuts will eliminate life-saving emergency relief through the UN's rapid-response mechanism, impacting more than 220,000 people displaced by conflict or natural disasters. More than 19 million Yemeni people are currently in need of assistance, with 17 million being food insecure.

Haiti U.S. cuts to World Food Program funding will leave vulnerable Haitians without hot meals and rations. 5.7 million Haitians, more than half of the population, currently face acute food insecurity. Funding cuts mean that recently displaced people are no longer being provided hot meals. Additionally, monthly rations for people facing emergency level hunger have been halved. The funding cuts could also result in further pipeline breaks next year, potentially impacting assistance for more than 300,000 people.

Global Health

Kenya Cuts to UN's program on HIV-AIDS have resulted in the termination of 1,952 doctors, 1,234 nurses, and 918 technical and management staff in Kenya. Immediate risks and disruptions include a loss of access to Kenya's electronic medical records system, reduced commodity availability, and scaled down services for HIV, TB, HIV prevention, malaria, immunization, and family planning programs.

Côte d'Ivoire 8,600 healthcare providers and community workers in Côte d'Ivoire have been terminated as an impact of U.S. funding suspension. Activities for key populations, HIV prevention, human rights, and community-led monitoring have ceased.

Namibia The withdrawal of U.S. funding has led to the termination of 423 medical and technical staff in Namibia. Disruptions in HIV prevention and treatment funding have put human rights and key populations—such as adolescent girls and young women—at risk. These groups already face increased levels of stigma and discrimination around health service monitoring and reduced access to awareness campaigns and social support services.

Angola Due to funding reductions to UN HIV-AIDS programs, Angola has run out of Bionline test kits used to detect the spread of HIV. Cuts have forced the agency to release 250 health officials working on these issues. U.S. funding is crucial to the quality of service provided, allowing for a lowered risk of transmission and health complications.

Malawi The cancellation of 44% of foreign aid awards in Malawi puts key projects focused on prevention and intervention of HIV at risk of termination. The current rationalization of services including testing site closures, suspension of the transportation system, essential personnel and outreach services may lead to increased rates of infection or untreated disease.

Tanzania The foreign aid pause has greatly inhibited the implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), an American global health initiative to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic. 5,000 health workers have now lost their jobs. 1.7 million Tanzanians currently live with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable populations throughout the country, like women and children, now face increased risks of infection as treatment interruptions and reduced prevention programming become more likely without U.S. funding.

Lesotho Due to recent U.S. funding cuts, Lesotho is facing a shortage in HIV medication and the closing of HIV clinics, increasing the death toll and spread of the disease. Lesotho historically had the second-highest rate of HIV infections in the world. However, America's PEPFAR aid program has been able to stem the tide of HIV in the country, reaching UN goals for HIV diagnosis and treatment.

Myanmar The delivery of malaria tests and drugs have stopped in Myanmar, where cases increased tenfold over four years. The Chin state has now lost tuberculosis screening and delivery of antiretrovirals as the U.S. previously provided these services. The absence of preventative tools and limited resources puts the region at heightened risk of a widespread resurgence of the disease.

Indonesia HIV and tuberculosis are major public health concerns in Indonesia and are threatened to be worsened by cuts, maintaining its status as a high-burden country. The freeze on U.S. foreign aid in Indonesia disrupts access to screenings and treatments, public education and advocacy—efforts essential to reducing infectious disease-related deaths like tuberculosis, the 4th highest cause of death in the country each year.

The Philippines As the spread of HIV/AIDS continues to worsen in the Philippines, U.S. cuts to foreign aid will eliminate 50% of funding for the UN's in-country work on HIV/AIDS, decreasing the office from 6 employees to 1. Roughly 140,000 Filipinos live with HIV but only 90,000 have access to effective treatment. These cuts will severely undermine the government's ability to control the epidemic.

Haiti Cuts to PEPFAR have caused a halt of PReP dispensal in Haiti, except for pregnant and lactating women. UNAIDS estimates a monthly rise of 30-50% of HIV cases as a result of this halt.

Ukraine As a high-burden country for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (TB), the foreign aid pause has limited Ukraine's medical infrastructure for addressing prevention and treatment efforts. The impact of aid cuts has been felt in the limiting of medical services, lab equipments, medication supply chain, TB education programs and ongoing research.

Refugees and Migrants

Chad Funding has run out for programmes that assist Sudanese refugees fleeing conflict, creating overcrowded and unsanitary conditions at border areas. The Sudanese Civil War has led to 2 million people seeking refuge in neighboring countries, such as Chad, which has hosted more than 760,000 Sudanese refugees.

Thailand In Thailand's Mae La camp, housing refugees from Myanmar, all food aid for standard families was cut at the end of July affecting over 80% of the camp's inhabitants. USAID was the primary funder for refugee camps in Thailand on the border with Myanmar's Kayah state — UNHCR-supported food distribution has lost 69% of its funding. As a result of the cuts, children under 5 have been limited to a daily food budget of under 5 U.S. cents per day. The camps house over 108,000 people, mostly belonging to the Karin ethnic group.

Indonesia The United Nations' migration agency can no longer provide aid to hundreds of Rohingya refugees in Indonesia. Without cash assistance, Rohingya refugees in Sumatra now have no access to income as the Indonesian government does not provide them with work permits. Roughly 2,800 Rohingya refugees have fled to the country to escape ethnic violence.

Bangladesh Due to an absence of U.S. funding, UNICEF has been forced to suspend thousands of educational centers in Bangladesh which previously served around 437,000 school age Rohingya children in refugee camps. There is no alternative formalized educational system in the camps, with all schooling being provided by NGOs, UN entities, or community members themselves.

Mexico The UN's refugee and migrant agency in Mexico lost 60% of their budget due to the cuts in U.S. foreign aid. This resulted in the closure of 4 offices and increased delays in asylum claims processing.

Honduras Due to the elimination of roughly \$13.7 million in U.S. funding, the UN's office for coordinating humanitarian aid in Honduras has had to cut 75% of its staff on the ground. These cuts will drastically limit the office's ability to deliver aid for the nearly 9.8 million Hondurans in need of humanitarian assistance, including the one in five Honduran children under five who are stunted due to food insecurity.

Colombia The International Organization for Migration's reconciliation and conflict prevention program has supported processes for legal immigration and refugee integration into Colombian society. Funds for this program have been cut. As the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance in Latin America, these cuts will impact 2.8 million Venezuelans who have fled to Colombia due to ongoing political persecution and economic chaos in the country.

Women and Girls

Sudan In Sudan, the U.S. previously provided 35% of the 2025 budget for the UN women's health agency and accounted for 57% of expected funding for 2025–2026. With these cuts, the suspension of medical supply funding will leave 200,000 women without essential reproductive health services, while support for mobile clinics is being cut, impacting 50,000 women. Training for frontline medical workers has been halted, further weakening healthcare capacity. 8,000 women and girls will no longer receive dignity kits, and 10,000 women will lose access to safe spaces that provide medical, legal, and psychosocial support.

Afghanistan The UN women's health agency warned that the absence of U.S. support in Afghanistan will likely result in an additional 1,200 maternal deaths and 109,000 unintended pregnancies between 2025 and 2028. The agency implements essential programming such as its Family Health House strategy, ensuring that women in rural areas of Afghanistan can access a community-based health facility within a 3 hour walk of their homes.

Palestine U.S. funding cuts will eliminate 40 safe spaces for women and girls, 80 health facilities and vital supplies for nearly 280,000 mothers and newborns. These cuts will drastically undermine the UN's ability to deliver life-saving reproductive health and protection services to meet the urgent needs of 1.84 million women and girls in Gaza and the West Bank.

Pakistan Cuts to UN sexual and reproductive health services in Pakistan will result in the termination of 62 health facilities across the country, limiting access to life-saving services for 1.7 million people of which 1.2 million are Afghan refugees. These cuts will significantly increase the demand for these resources as annually, roughly 114 million women in Pakistan lack access to reproductive health services.

Bangladesh In Bangladesh, cuts to U.S. foreign aid will leave nearly 600,000 beneficiaries without access to life-saving services such as reproductive health and gender-based prevention and response services. In addition, a program providing refugees with life-skills education services will be terminated, impacting 9,000 beneficiaries. These cuts will impede the significant progress made toward reducing rates of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality in recent years.

Turkiye U.S. cuts have resulted in the elimination of 11 mobile units in Türkiye providing sexual and reproduction health services, leaving an estimated 28,9000 people without access to essential medical care. Over the last two decades, rates of teenage pregnancy have decreased by almost 40%, though cuts to essential services risk to undermine these gains.

Combating Illicit Drugs

Manzanillo, Mexico The U.S. has stopped a program that helped Mexican authorities predict and prevent money laundering from illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking. As it stands, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths in this country. Over the past year, there has been an almost 25% decline in drug overdose deaths in the U.S., due in part to enhanced partnerships with UN agencies - like the UN Office on Drugs and Crime - and Mexican authorities. Ending this and similar programs endangers the lives of U.S. citizens.

<https://betterworldcampaign.org/impact-of-foreign-assistance-cuts>

It is also estimated that there is a possible reduction in peacekeeping efforts by 25% according to UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix. These cuts will affect patrols and protections duties while also affecting air operations and support functions.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/10/1166122#:~:text=Massive%20cuts%20in%20the%20field,because%20of%20the%20compressed%20timeframe.>

The schedule to find out which countries are fully paid and which countries are behind in payments can also be found at:

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/honourroll.shtml>

The cuts in funding ultimately threatens the existence of the United Nations itself. There are growing tension about the effectiveness of the UN in handling world conflicts. As well, there is a growing movement in the United States and other countries that the UN has a bias that works against the interest of the US and some of its allies. Regardless of the veracity of these claims, cuts to the UN budget threatens its ability, not only to subsidize effective programming that helps battle poverty, hunger, gender inequality, global health concerns, threats to sustainability and climate change but also in helping to maintain stability in areas of conflict.

Key Issues for Debate:

What are the best solutions to deal with the funding crisis that the United Nations is facing. As with any financial crisis, there are four options:

- a. Reduce spending and program delivery
- b. Maintain spending and program delivery and run the risk of financial bankruptcy and collapse
- c. Increase funding sources
- d. Find a solution that combines elements of each of the three primary options (reduce, maintain, increase)

Key Topics for Debate:Discussion:

1. Reduction in spending
 - a. What programs need to be cut?
 - b. What programs can be maintained?
 - c. What will the effects of each of these decisions be?
2. Maintain spending
 - a. How can spending be more effectively managed?
 - b. Can spending be maintained without compromising new initiatives?
 - c. What steps can be taken to prepare for unexpected costs?
3. Increase funding
 - a. How can countries be required to maintain or increase their contributions?
 - b. Can other sources of funding be found?
4. Other considerations:
 - a. Should the UN adopt a new funding model which is more equitable?
 - b. Should the UN hold countries accountable for not making payments (eg. Loss of voting privileges, loss of membership)
 - c. What would be the effect of trying to hold countries accountable for not making payments?

Points to consider:

1. How would the US react to any pushback by the UN regarding reduction in US funding?
2. What are the long term implications for the Sustainable Development Goals as identified by the UN?
3. What are the implications for poorer countries in their efforts to maintain UN funding targets.
4. What are the implications for political, economic and social stability with a pull back by the US in its traditional role as the major contributor to the UN?
5. What power vacuums will be created by funding cuts and what countries are willing to fill in those vacuums? (ie. China, Russia)

Specific Items For Your Country to Consider:

1. What is the expected contributions your country is to make to the UN?
2. Has your country met its contribution requirements?
3. Does your country benefit from UN aid programs?
4. How would your country be affected by cuts to aid it receives?
5. Does your country require UN peacekeepers?
6. What would the effect be on your country should peacekeepers be removed?
7. Does your country contribute peacekeepers to other countries? If so, what countries?

8. What would the effect be if your country no longer supported peacekeepers to those countries?

Resources:

POLITICO

Trump administration says it's cutting 90% of USAID foreign aid contracts

<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/26/trump-administration-says-its-cutting-90-of-usaid-foreign-aid-contracts-00206377>

AMERICAN PROGRESS

Fact Sheet: Trump's Rescission Request Would Slash Spending on Foreign Assistance Programs That Benefit American Interests

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-trumps-rescission-request-would-slash-spending-on-foreign-assistance-programs-that-benefit-american-interests/>

HEALTH POLICY WATCH

No Talks Between WHO and US Despite 'Severe Disruption' in Health Services Since Trump Slashed Aid

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/no-talks-between-who-and-us-despite-severe-disruption-in-health-services-since-trump-slashed-aid/>

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

How Much Does the U.S. Fund the United Nations?

<https://www.cfr.org/article/funding-united-nations-what-impact-do-us-contributions-have-un-agencies-and-programs>

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

How the United Nations is funded, and who pays the most

BETTER WORLD CAMPAIGN

The Impact of Foreign Aid Cuts

<https://betterworldcampaign.org/impact-of-foreign-assistance-cuts>

IISD – SDG Knowledge Hub

Member States Approve UN Budget for 2025

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/member-states-approve-usd-372-billion-un-budget-for-2025/>

Le Monde Diplomatique

Richard Gowan.

<https://mondediplo.com/2025/10/14un>

GatesNotes

Three tough truths about climate

Bill Gates, October 27, 2025

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/work/accelerate-energy-innovation/reader/helping-the-worlds-poorest-adapt-to-climate-change>

UN Documents

United Nations, General Assembly, **Eightieth Session, 5th Meeting (AM)**

United Nations Risks Bankruptcy as Resources Shrink, Needs Grow, Secretary-General Warns Fifth Committee during Discussion on Proposed 2026 Programme Budget

<https://press.un.org/en/2025/gaab4505.doc.htm>

United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHRC

UNHCR's Grandi: critical funding gap may force deeper cuts to refugee aid

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/unhcr-s-grandi-critical-funding-gap-may-force-deeper-cuts-refugee-aid>

United Nations, General Assembly

Committee on Contributions

Contributions received for 2025 for the United Nations Regular Budget

<https://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/honourroll.shtml>

United Nations, **UN News**

Vibhu Mishra, 16 October, 2025

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/10/1166122#:~:text=Massive%20cuts%20in%20the%20field,because%20of%20the%20compressed%20timeframe.>