



The future of Trump's global health agenda



The Washington Post/Getty Images

Last week's US midterm election was a partial rebuke to President Donald Trump. But although Trump's legislative agenda has largely come to an end, his ability to affect global health through non-legislative means remains vast. His record to date is not encouraging. The USA spends more than US\$35 billion on foreign aid each year, and there are numerous ways that Trump can manipulate the appropriated funding to suit his whims: defer or ignore allocated funds until the end of the fiscal year or transfer funds from one programme to another, such as when Trump transferred \$10 million from disaster relief to Immigration and Customs Enforcement this year.

Just in the past year, Trump has begun pulling Ebola experts from the field, threatened to cut foreign aid to countries in Latin America over political disagreements, slashed funds to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and reduced other economic aid agency support, as well as moves to curtail refugees and asylum seekers in the USA. Trump has attempted to massively cut funding for the President's Emergency Plan

for AIDS Relief, and the state department has announced that it will reduce support for sexual and reproductive health programmes. The reimposition of crushing economic sanctions on Iran will have devastating effects on Iran's health-care sector.

Many presidents turn towards foreign policy when stymied domestically, and Trump has a record of using global health programmes to deliver politically charged victories to his evangelical, nationalist base once he can no longer satisfy with domestic victories. Trump has given ample evidence of his willingness to use global aid for political purposes, and his domestic constraints might drive him to use those tools more aggressively. Democrats will provide much-needed oversight but little can constrain Trump's moves within the Executive Branch, which makes it incumbent on other nations and global health organisations to resist the changes politically when they can—and step in to fill the gap left by America's abandonment of global health and its ecological commitments. ■ *The Lancet*

For Trump's scorecard for health see *Health Policy Lancet* 2017; 389: 748–54
For more on the President's ability to defer allocated funds see <https://www.forbes.com/sites/haroldfurchtgottroth/2018/04/09/understanding-presidential-line-item-veto-rescissions-and-deferrals/#6e04a8fd6dff>



Time to address nutritional security



Peter Daseky/Getty Images

Last week, the Global Panel of Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GLOPAN) published a policy brief: *Preventing nutrient loss and waste across the food system: policy actions for high quality diets*. The brief argues that loss and waste of high-nutrient foods from our global food systems is a huge problem, which, if addressed, could help tackle all forms of malnutrition and improve poor-quality diets that lead to ill health.

This brief's strength is in quantifying the losses. In low-income countries, unintentional food loss occurs mainly during production processes, whereas in high- and middle-income countries, food waste is mostly driven by retailers and consumers. Both amount to major losses of resources, including water, land, and energy, and both contribute to climate change. The global economic cost of food loss and waste is US\$940 billion per year. Ironically, the perishable nature of nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, seeds and nuts, meat, and fish and seafood make them disproportionately prone to both loss and waste. More than 50% of all fruits and vegetables and 20–30% of meat produced globally,

are lost or wasted. Availability of micronutrients are of specific concern. The brief notes that global agriculture produces 22% more vitamin A than we require, but that, after loss and waste, the amount available for human consumption is 11% less than that needed.

GLOPAN formulates six general priority areas for policy action to mitigate perishable nutrient-rich food while concurrently protecting losses in the food system. But they will not alone generate the robust evidence needed to motivate multisectoral partnerships—although this document is only intended as one of several policy briefs.

Addressing food loss and waste is an important component of global food systems. But the actual food being produced (and wasted) remains unsustainable. The complexity of the food system cannot be overstated, and, with many parts to consider, each aspect should be approached only as one of many solutions that together address the whole. The EAT-Lancet Commission, due to be published in January, 2019, will do just that. ■ *The Lancet*

For more on Preventing nutrient loss and waste across the food system: Policy actions for high-quality diets see http://glopan.org/sites/default/files/Downloads/Glopan_FoodLossWastePolicyBrief.pdf
For the EAT-Lancet Commission see *Comment Lancet* 2016; 387: 2364–65