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WHO sets up Council on Economics of Health for All

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The Council will focus on investments in health, and achieving sustainable, inclusive and innovation-led economic growth.



The World Health Organisation has announced a new Council on the Economics of Health for All, staffed by leading economists and health experts, to put ‘Health for All’ at the centre of how we think about value creation and economic growth.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the consequences of chronic under-investment in public health. But we don’t just need more investment; we must also rethink how we value health,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO as he made the announcement on the final day of the resumed 73rd World Health Assembly.

Chaired by noted economist Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Professor, Economics of Innovation and Public Value, Founding Director, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, University College London, the Council will aim to create a body of work that sees investment in local and global health systems as an investment in the future, not as a short-term cost. Designing such investments makes our economies more healthy, inclusive and sustainable.

“We are living through multiple crises: economic, climate and health related. If we continue to patch up the system each time, we will always be one step behind. I am thrilled to work closely with Dr Tedros on a proactive Health for All economic agenda, to shape our economies so they truly have wellbeing and inclusion at the centre of how we create value, measure it and distribute it,” said Mazzucato.

Returning to the status quo following the pandemic will not be enough – we need an innovation-led transformation of our health systems to achieve economic wellbeing everywhere.

“The time has come for a new narrative that sees health not as a cost, but an investment that is the foundation of productive, resilient and stable economies,” Dr Tedros said.

The Council on the Economics of Health For All is expected to hold its first virtual session in the coming weeks, to discuss its work plan and mode of operation. The Council will produce thought leadership for implementing change, and help to inform the piloting of initiatives at country level.