

## Global Organisations and Their Impact on Sustainable Healthcare Systems



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Sustainable healthcare is not just about providing medical services; it encompasses the ability to maintain and improve health systems in an equitable, environmentally conscious and economically viable way. In an increasingly interconnected world, global organisations such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Bank are crucial in addressing health-related challenges that transcend national borders. These organisations aim to create frameworks and provide resources to ensure healthcare systems are accessible, financially sustainable and environmentally responsible.

However, achieving these goals requires addressing diverse challenges, such as disparities in healthcare access, environmental impact and economic stability. Global organisations contribute to sustainable healthcare systems in three key areas: promoting equitable access, reducing the ecological footprint and fostering economic sustainability. Through these areas, global organisations aim to create healthcare systems that satisfy current populations and are resilient enough to serve future generations effectively.

### **Equitable Access: Promoting Inclusivity**

One of the primary challenges in global healthcare is ensuring equitable access to essential services. Economic disparities, cultural norms and political programmes heavily influence health outcomes. Global organisations like WHO and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) strive to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) through initiatives to reduce inequalities and enhance healthcare access.

UHC, promoted by WHO, ensures that individuals can access healthcare services without financial hardship. It is a critical pillar in achieving social sustainability, centring on fairness and accessibility for all. PAHO's integrated care policy in the Pan Americas exemplifies how global organisations attempt to tackle healthcare fragmentation, thereby improving efficiency and equity. These coordinated efforts illustrate how collaboration across sectors can bridge gaps and promote healthcare inclusivity globally.

### **Environmental Sustainability: Reducing the Carbon Footprint**

The healthcare sector significantly contributes to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which has a dual impact: it exacerbates climate change and negatively affects health outcomes. Global organisations are actively engaging in efforts to combat climate change by setting standards, financing sustainable projects, and advocating for the adoption of renewable energy in healthcare.

For instance, the International Hospital Federation (IHF) promotes knowledge sharing and the implementation of best practices for environmental sustainability. Additionally, initiatives such as Aga Khan Health Services' Net Zero Report outline practical steps to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. These measures include transitioning to electric vehicles, improving energy efficiency and enhancing waste management. Through these initiatives, global organisations are vital in creating environmentally sustainable healthcare systems that aim to achieve net-zero emissions.

### **Economic Sustainability: Building Financially Viable Healthcare Models**

Economic sustainability in healthcare revolves around maintaining financial stability while delivering high-quality care. This involves efficient resource management and investing in health promotion and prevention to reduce long-term costs. Global organisations like the World Bank focus on promoting economically sustainable healthcare models through capacity-building, funding infrastructure projects and advocating for public health initiatives.

For example, the World Bank's Human Capital Project emphasises the importance of investing in healthcare and education to build a healthier, more productive workforce. Such investments lead to healthier populations and reduce the economic burden of disease. Additionally, initiatives like telemedicine projects funded by the International Development Association (IDA) in Africa have improved healthcare accessibility while minimising costs. This approach highlights the importance of resource efficiency and innovation in achieving economic sustainability.

Global organisations are pivotal in advancing sustainable healthcare by addressing issues related to equitable access, environmental impact and economic viability. Their collaborative efforts aim to promote inclusivity, reduce the healthcare sector's carbon footprint and build financially stable healthcare models. However, challenges such as financial constraints, cultural differences and fragmented approaches remain significant obstacles.

Global organisations must implement adaptable strategies sensitive to local contexts to overcome these challenges. This decentralised approach, combined with sustained capacity-building and collaborative platforms, can enhance the effectiveness of global healthcare interventions. By thinking globally and acting locally, these organisations can make substantial strides towards achieving sustainable healthcare systems for all.

Source: [International Hospital Federation](#)

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