

RECOMMENDATION 10 OF 20

CONTINENTAL

Act within 1 year · by February 2027

Agree one African standard for payment, review and exit terms in aid deals

Related briefings: [Development cooperation](#), [Health](#)

IN BRIEF

- African governments have promised to pay \$9.1 billion of their own money under health deals with the United States, and each one negotiated its terms alone.
- The African Union should adopt one model agreement that sets how much a government pays each year, when the deal is published and reviewed, and how it can end.
- Zambia should use it first, because its deal is being rewritten and is not yet signed.

Why this matters

Twenty-four African countries have signed US health deals worth \$23 billion in total. Their governments are to pay \$9.1 billion of that, or 39%. The share varies widely: under 4% in Mozambique and 7% in Malawi, against 59% in Nigeria and 79% in Botswana. In each deal the government's share rises every year as the US share falls. A government that cannot keep up risks losing services its people now depend on.

These payments compete with interest on debt. Interest took 24.3% of Kenya's revenue in 2023 and 35.8% of Malawi's in 2024. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) expects aid for health to fall by between 29% and 46% from 2024 to 2026. Governments are promising more of their budgets just as other money for health shrinks and interest bills stay high.

The deals can also carry terms that have nothing to do with health. Zambia's draft linked health aid to a deal on critical minerals. On 25 September its foreign minister said that link had been set aside, and the United States has since agreed to drop the data clauses as well. In Kenya, the High Court suspended the deal because it broke Kenya's data laws.

Africa CDC, the African Union's public health agency, has offered to help any country that renegotiates. It has also proposed a meeting of all African health ministers with the US government. Help to one country at a time still leaves each to bargain alone. A model agreement would give every government the same starting text.

Sources for this section (8)

- [KFF: tracker of US health deals, with each government's share](#)
- [Think Global Health: government shares rise each year](#)
- [World Bank: interest payments as a share of government revenue](#)
- [OECD: projected fall in aid for health](#)
- [Semafor: Zambia and the minerals link](#)
- [Lusaka Times: the United States drops the minerals and data clauses](#)
- [Carnegie Endowment: the suspension of Kenya's deal](#)
- [The Standard: Africa CDC proposes a joint meeting with the United States](#)

Four levels of action

1 What Africa asks of the world

Governments that fund programmes on a shared-payment basis, starting with the United States, should publish the full texts of their deals and accept the African standard. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) should count these payment promises when it sets spending limits in its loan programmes.

WHO	The US Department of State and other funding governments; the IMF
WHEN	IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings, 12 to 17 April 2027

2 What the African Union does

The AU Commission and Africa CDC collect and compare every signed deal with finance ministries. They draft a model agreement that ties each year's payment to what the budget can bear. It requires publication and regular review, and it sets out how a country can leave. Africa CDC's rules on health data are attached. Finance ministers endorse the draft, and AU leaders adopt it.

WHO	The AU Commission, Africa CDC and African finance ministers
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WHEN

Draft by December 2026; adoption at the AU summit in February 2027

3 What regional groups do

Finance ministers in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) compare their members' payment schedules. No member should accept terms that undercut its neighbours. The standard is published openly, so Burkina Faso, Niger and Madagascar can use it. They have US deals but are suspended from AU meetings.

WHO

ECOWAS, the East African Community and SADC

WHEN

By January 2027

4 Which country goes first, and why

Zambia goes first. Its \$1.5 billion deal is waiting to be signed, and the United States has agreed to drop the data clauses and the link to minerals. Zambia can write the standard's clauses into its text before it signs. No country that has already signed can do that.

WHO

Zambia's Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health

WHEN

Before signing, and by 31 December 2026

Before another country can do this

- ☒ A payment schedule checked against the country's plan for managing its debt.
- ☒ The finance ministry at the table beside the health ministry.
- ☒ Publication of the deal, or approval by parliament.
- ☒ A data protection law, so the rules on health data can work.

What does not carry over from the first country

- Zambia is negotiating late, so it can learn from 24 African countries that have already signed.
- The minerals link in Zambia's draft gave its objections public weight that other countries lack.

Who else is ready

COUNTRY	WHY	SOURCE
Nigeria	It has promised \$2.98 billion, the largest payment by any African government, which is 59% of its deal.	Source
Tanzania	It signed the most recent African deal on 1 July 2026, worth \$3.1 billion, and pays 58% of it.	Source
Mozambique	It pays under 4% of a \$1.9 billion deal, so it is most exposed if US money falls short.	Source
Kenya	Its court case will be the first legal test of the terms of these deals.	Source

Has this worked before?

On 22 November 2023, the African Group at the UN, led by Nigeria's ambassador, won a vote in a General Assembly committee on cooperation over tax. The vote was 125 to 48. One text, tabled for all African states, opened talks on global tax rules at the UN, where Africa's numbers count. [Source](#)

African Union: the UN vote on international tax cooperation

First steps

- 1** **AFRICAN UNION** the AU Commission and Africa CDC collect and compare every signed deal with finance ministries by the end of November 2026. Finance ministers endorse a draft in January 2027, for adoption in February.
- 2** **REGIONAL GROUPS** finance officials in ECOWAS, the East African Community and SADC check members' payment schedules against their debt plans by January 2027.
- 3** **ZAMBIA** the finance and health ministries write the draft clauses into the revised text before signing, and by 31 December 2026.

Who acts, and with what

WHO LEADS	The AU Commission with Africa CDC and African finance ministers; Zambia as the first country to use the standard
INSTRUMENT	A model agreement drafted by January 2027 and adopted at the AU summit in February 2027
HOW PROGRESS IS CHECKED	The standard's clauses appear in Zambia's signed deal and in deals that are renegotiated
SIGNAL TO CHANGE COURSE	Three or more governments miss scheduled payments without renegotiating their deals
WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY	Governments that have signed may not want to reopen their deals. Funders may offer better terms to countries that break ranks. The standard needs finance ministers as well as health ministers.
COST AND MONEY	The cost of drafting the standard is not yet known, and it would fall on the AU Commission's budget. The money it would govern is large: \$24.1 billion across the 35 US health deals alone.

Who else contributes

WHO	CONTRIBUTION
Zambia's finance and health ministries	Test the clauses first
Attorneys general	Draft the model clauses
Data protection authorities	Supply the rules on health data
Parliaments	Approve deals against the standard
Civil society	Check that governments keep to it

What each audience can do

Governments

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Use the standard in every new or renewed deal

WHAT YOU GAIN

Less risk of sudden budget shocks

AU and regional bodies

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Adopt the standard in February 2027

WHAT YOU GAIN

The weight of negotiating together

NGOs and civil society

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Publish the terms of deals and check that governments keep them

WHAT YOU GAIN

Open use of public money

Researchers and media

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Compare deals across countries

WHAT YOU GAIN

Evidence for negotiators

Philanthropy

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Pay for legal and budget analysis for negotiators

WHAT YOU GAIN

Stronger public systems

The briefings behind this

Sector · Observed

Development cooperation

Grants for Africa are shrinking fast, and the money that replaces them asks for data, a share of the budget or market interest.

[Open the briefing](#)

Sector · Strong inference

Health

Health money for Africa now comes through one-to-one deals, and patients' data is part of the price.

[Open the briefing](#)

Words used on this page

African Union (AU)

The organisation of 55 African states, based in Addis Ababa. Its heads of state meet each February. It can suspend members after a coup. [Glossary](#) · [Source: au.int](#)

OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a Paris-based club of 38 mostly rich countries. It keeps the official figures on aid. [Development cooperation briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

Critical minerals and processing

Minerals such as lithium, cobalt and copper needed for batteries and clean energy. Selling ore or concentrate earns far less than processing it at home into metals or chemicals. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [Climate and energy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

Africa CDC

The African Union's public health agency, based in Addis Ababa. It coordinates disease control across the continent. [Health briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: africacdc.org](#)

African Union Commission

The African Union's secretariat. It prepares decisions for heads of state and carries them out. [Glossary](#)

ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger left it in January 2025. [Politics and governance briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

East African Community

A bloc of eastern and central African states, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [Glossary](#)

SADC

The Southern African Development Community, 16 states from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to South Africa. [Glossary](#) · [Source: sadc.int](#)

Data protection law

A law that sets rules on collecting, storing and sharing personal information, usually enforced by a national regulator. [AI and technology briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

The African Group at the UN

The 54 African member states working together as one of the UN's five regional groups. The groups put forward candidates for elections to UN bodies. The African Group itself has no vote on the Security Council. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [The UN and diplomacy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: un.org](#)

UN General Assembly

The meeting of all 193 UN member states, each with one vote. It meets every year from September. It can make statements, elect members of other bodies and approve the UN budget, but most of what it says does not bind governments. [Glossary](#) · [Source: un.org](#)