World Health Organization (WHO)

Why in news?

On global world health day, April 6, 2023 the WHO has completed 75 years, despite some great successes, the WHO has received its fair share of criticism.

What is World Health Organization (WHO)?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) came into effect on April 7, 1948.
- The WHO is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that is responsible for international public health.
- The WHO's mission is to achieve health for all people.
- WHO states that health is a human right that every human being is entitled to, without distinction of race, religion, or political belief, an individual's economic or social condition.
- It also states that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security.
- The WHO's headquarters is based in Geneva, Switzerland with six regional and 150 country offices across the world.
- The WHO is a democratic organization with role to guide the response, develop guidance, but not to go into a country to help address a specific health threat.

What are the activities of WHO?

- **Smallpox** - Is the only human disease to be eradicated by WHO.
- WHO played a key role galvanizing the world around about eradication of small box.
- **Ebola outbreak** - The organization was criticized, among other things, for not reacting swiftly enough to address the epidemic.
- The WHO has even made structural changes considering the future.
- **Malaria** - WHO launched the Global Malaria Eradication Programme (GMEP) in 1955.
- It looked promising, with 15 countries and one territory managing to eradicate the disease.
- But there was little to no progress in sub-Saharan Africa under the program, and in many places, failure to sustain GMEP actually led to a resurgence of malaria and eventually discontinued in 1969.
- **COVID-19** – US President Donald Trump and others complained at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that the WHO was not doing enough to support member states in their fight against the disease.

Public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) is defined as an

extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response.

What are some of the WHO's success?

- Eradication of smallpox in 1980
- Reduction in the number of deaths from malaria and tuberculosis
- Development of vaccines and treatments for HIV/AIDS, polio, and other diseases
- Provision of technical assistance to countries to improve their health systems
- Coordination of the global response to health emergencies

What are the challenges to WHO?

- Lack of funding
- Political interference and lack of coordination by members
- Inefficient bureaucracy
- Resistance to change
- The spread of new and complex diseases

Reference

1. The Indian Express | Issues And Challenges Of WHO

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