

Obama administration seeks \$63B for world health

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(AP) -- The Obama White House said Tuesday that it wants \$63 billion to be set aside in the fiscal 2010 budget to fight global diseases over the next six years.

The initiative, announced by Deputy Secretary of State Jack Lew, continues an effort begun under former President George W. Bush to fight [HIV/AIDS](#), tuberculosis and [malaria](#). Obama's budget request, he said, also will specify more money for prenatal and postnatal care, children's health and fighting [tropical diseases](#).

"We cannot fix every problem," Obama said in a written statement. "But we have a responsibility to protect the health of our people, while saving lives, reducing suffering, and supporting the health and dignity of people everywhere. America can make a significant difference in meeting these challenges and that is why my administration is committed to act."

Lew called it "an extraordinary step to save the lives of men, women and children" and said it links U.S. national security policy with carrying out a moral obligation to help the world's poorest and most threatened populations.

"Our announcement today exemplifies a strategy we're bringing to bear across our foreign aid programs, even as we address crises in regions with conflict, we need to make the investments necessary to prevent such crises from occurring in the future," Lew said. "We are ramping up efforts to fight poverty, [food insecurity](#) and disease with solutions that

will leave behind the tools to sustain long-term progress."

The [Bush administration](#) pushed for funding to improve health in the world's poorest places, arguing that some of those places could otherwise be breeding grounds for terrorism and anti-American sentiment. By helping those populations, Washington hoped to improve the United States' image and security.

Lew praised the Bush-era policy and said it would continue under his successor.

"When we talk about development and diplomacy, we mean the United States needs to be affirmatively active dealing with some of the root causes of instability in so many poor countries," Lew said. "If people can't provide for the basic needs of their family ... it's a dangerous situation."

Obama plans to release his budget proposal in detail on Thursday. Ahead of the formal announcement, the White House has been detailing pieces of it, including \$8.6 billion for the coming fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. The request is a \$460 million increase over this year's budget.

Last year, Congress passed and Bush signed legislation to triple U.S. spending from \$15 billion over the previous five years to \$48 billion covering 2009 and the next four years.

Lew said the "challenge now is to take the things we've learned ... and build on it."

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