

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-220, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 9, 2020

Dear Senator McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Senator Schumer and Congressman McCarthy:

As business leaders we are concerned about the devastating impact of COVID-19 on our nation's health and its economy, as well as the enormous potential human cost of the epidemic globally. We are writing to urge you to include a substantial commitment to address global aspects of the pandemic in the next emergency supplemental appropriations bill.

In sub-Saharan Africa, COVID-19 threatens fragile health systems and the virus has the potential to infect nearly a [quarter of a billion people](#) over the next year. A United Nations commission projected [300,000 to 3.3 million people in Africa could die](#) as a direct result of COVID-19. [John Hopkins University researchers](#) found that the global child mortality rate could rise for the first time in 60 years, with a 45 percent jump in deaths before age five in the next six months across 118 countries studied.

COVID-19 also risks undermining decades of progress against epidemics that kill millions of people every year: AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Researchers at [Imperial College estimate](#) that in heavily affected countries, COVID-19 could result in a 10 percent increase in death from HIV, 20 percent in TB and 36 percent in malaria.

The U.S. should be proud that our considerable investments against these major infectious diseases have saved millions of lives and put the world on a path to ending these epidemics. COVID-19 threatens to erase that progress.

COVID-19 will also continue to have immense effects on economic prosperity. The [World Economic Forum](#) projects that 23 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa will be pushed into poverty. Emerging economies could experience a [decline in output of 25 percent](#). The International Monetary Fund estimated global trade could fall by 13 to 32 percent.

Investing in helping low- and middle-income nations achieve control of COVID-19 is not only a humanitarian necessity but crucial to American safety and prosperity. No country is safe if COVID-19 rages elsewhere. Markets for small and large businesses in the U.S. export economy will shrink; travel and hospitality sectors will be devastated by constraints of real and perceived safety and expendable income; and American jobs will be lost.

A variety of tested global health programs are ready to play a central role in America's global response to COVID-19, including our bilateral programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the President's Malaria Initiative, the USAID tuberculosis program, GAVI and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

It is right that Congress is focused on saving American lives and livelihoods from COVID-19. Yet U.S. global standing and its citizens' health and economic well-being will suffer if COVID-19 is allowed to get out of control in other countries. Broadly accessible mitigation measures and health services in the immediate term and, ultimately, a globally accessible vaccine are essential.

Time is of the essence. Countries and communities need assistance in the coming weeks and months to avert the worst potential consequences. Investments are urgently needed to protect health workers, scale diagnostics and deliver health care services.

As you prepare COVID supplemental funding legislation, substantially increased investments in the global response must be included. Millions of lives are depending on it. Thank you for your consideration.

Abbott

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The Coca-Cola Company

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MTV Staying Alive Foundation

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Takeda Pharmaceutical Company

Thermo Fisher Scientific

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