March 24, 2023

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations and Related
Programs
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations and Related
Programs
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Lee:

Thank you for your leadership on the House Committee on Appropriations and its Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. As you begin to prepare the State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), we respectfully request a significant increase in funding for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and strong support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). We look to you for crucial and timely support of these programs as PEPFAR and the Global Fund work towards the rapid acceleration of HIV prevention and treatment to reach the goal of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of PEPFAR’s creation. First announced by President George W. Bush in his 2003 State of the Union address as an “opportunity to do so much for so many”, the PEPFAR program has shown what can be accomplished through U.S. leadership. The bold vision of the PEPFAR program paired with enduring, consistent bipartisan Congressional support is responsible for saving 25 million lives.

U.S. leadership through PEPFAR and other bilateral investments at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), along with multilateral investments in the Global Fund, have been transformative in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the results are astounding. In 2022, PEPFAR supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for 20.1 million people. Through PEPFAR support, over 7.1 million orphans, vulnerable children and their caregivers accessed critical care and support services, and since its inception twenty years ago, more than 5.5 million new infections have been averted in children.

By working hand in hand with countries and partners like PEPFAR, the Global Fund’s efforts have saved more than 50 million lives since its inception in 2002. In 2021, the Global Fund supported 23.3 million people on antiretroviral treatment for HIV, treated 5.3 million people for TB, and distributed 133 million insecticide-treated bed nets for malaria prevention. Despite the tremendous progress made on HIV globally, every week, nearly 5,000 young women aged 15-24 are infected with HIV worldwide. Global Fund investments in programs that support adolescent girls and young women in 13 priority countries increased 24% for the 2020-2022 allocation compared to the previous cycle, with a total investment of $3.26 billion.
Progress on the TB epidemic hinges on finding the nearly three million people “missed” by health systems each year. By focusing on 20 countries that account for a majority of missing people with TB globally, Global Fund investments contributed to over one million additional TB case notifications by the end of 2019. The Global Fund helps fragile states which face flaring epidemics like HIV and TB, such as Bangladesh, where its catalytic funding supports innovative programs to detect cases of tuberculosis in the community and private health facilities that would otherwise be missed by public health systems. As the host of the Global Fund’s Seventh Replenishment last fall, bold U.S. leadership spurred the largest amount ever raised for the partnership and incentivized several nations to increase their pledges.

Despite significant progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the work is not over. 10 million people – nearly a quarter of those living with HIV – are still not able to access the antiretroviral therapy they need to survive and thrive. Only roughly half of HIV-positive children currently access treatment, which is especially disturbing because half of them will die before their second birthday if they remain untreated. 1.5 million people are still newly infected with HIV annually, a number that remains essentially stagnant and well below the 2020 global goal of less than 500,000 new infections a year.

PEPFAR and the Global Fund have been working tirelessly to alleviate the substantial impacts of COVID-19 on HIV testing, prevention, and treatment, but significant investments are needed to effectively address both HIV and COVID-19 recovery. These programs are leading global efforts to not only improve HIV care, but also enable countries to improve the overall health of their citizens by creating a lasting infrastructure and local community capacity that positions partner countries to respond to a range of health challenges and threats, including COVID-19. Providing robust support for PEPFAR and Global Fund bolsters the United States’ standing and cooperative relationship with the world, increases our ability to strengthen health systems to mitigate disease outbreaks, and also drives progress in combatting tuberculosis and malaria.

When properly resourced, PEPFAR holds great promise as a platform that can provide uninterrupted essential HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services while also supporting countries’ COVID-19 response and recovery. PEPFAR can mitigate some of the adverse effects of COVID-19 on HIV services and PLHIV themselves by building upon lessons learned through 20 years of hard-fought gains. Its responsive, data-driven efforts are saving lives – but they require sufficient funding to continue to do so.

These successes are only possible because of the longstanding bipartisan congressional and presidential support for the programs. With your leadership, we could end AIDS around the world, and we look forward to working with your committee to achieve these goals. Thank you for considering our request and for your ongoing commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Sincerely,
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

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