

U.S. leadership is urgently needed to end the COVID-19 pandemic

As a leader in global health and development, the United States must have a robust response to the devastating global COVID-19 pandemic in order to save lives and protect hard-fought gains in public health in low-income countries. The development of safe, effective vaccines against a deadly pandemic disease less than a year after it emerged is an extraordinary achievement, made possible by public investment in science and technology.



Extreme global inequity in access to COVID-19 vaccines persists.

Across the continent of Africa, [less than 4 percent](#) of the population is fully vaccinated. There is no credible plan for rich countries to make enough vaccine available to reach World Health Organization (WHO) targets to vaccinate 40 percent of the world by the end of 2021 and 70 percent by mid-2022.

Many low-income countries hoped to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses through COVAX, a global collaboration between rich and poor countries to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. However, many rich countries jumped the queue by creating separate deals with vaccine manufacturers and paying a higher price per immunization dose than COVAX.

Now, rich countries are flush with vaccine supply—or about to be. The U.S. and other wealthy countries could continue their vaccination programs, including boosters, and still have a [1.2 billion dose surplus](#) at the end of the year. Meanwhile, the under-resourced COVAX had to slash its already moderate goals, reducing its 2021 [vaccine supply forecast](#) by 25 percent. It is unconscionable for rich countries to hoard the resources and vaccine manufacturing know-how that could end the misery of COVID-19.

Right now, Congress is making decisions about how to include resources in the next recovery/infrastructure package that would help to address this need and support a massive increase to global manufacturing capacity. The House passed a bill out of the Energy and Commerce committee that includes \$2 billion for this end, which is a good first step. We now need the Senate to meet or increase these resources.

Will you urge Senate leadership and leadership of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP) committee to match the House proposal to include at least than \$2 billion to scale up global vaccine manufacturing in any next COVID-19 relief package?