

Action Sheet

Congress is Neglecting a Global Response to the Global COVID-19 Pandemic

It is past time. The United States must respond to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and protect hard-fought gains in global health and education in low-income countries. It's not just the spread of COVID-19 that is putting lives at risk in low-resource settings; it's the disruption of other vital health services, vaccinations, and medicine supplies resulting from governments diverting scarce healthcare services to deal with COVID-19.

Decades of progress enabled by U.S. leadership are in jeopardy as COVID-19 presents an urgent threat to the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Too much is at stake if Congress doesn't act.

Here are some projections of what could happen without further global support from the U.S. and other nations:

- The World Bank estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic could drive 100 million people into extreme poverty.
- June surveys from Global Fund recipients report that 80 percent of HIV programs reported disruption to service delivery (21 percent with high or very high disruptions); while 76 percent of TB services have been disrupted.
- According to the Stop TB Partnership, disruptions to health services could cause an additional 6.3 million cases of tuberculosis and an additional 1.4 million TB deaths between 2020 and 2025.
- Sixty-eight countries are experiencing disruptions in vaccine delivery in the face of COVID-19. That puts 80 million children under age one at risk of missing their routine immunizations.
- Without urgent action, the number of people facing hunger is expected to double by the end of 2020, according to the World Food Program.
- Malnutrition contributes to nearly half of the deaths of children under five, and in projections of the impact of disruption to health and nutrition services, wasting, a form of severe malnutrition, is the single biggest driver of increased child deaths.
- The current generation of students is at risk of losing \$10 trillion in earnings over time due to pandemic-related school closures.

Congress Can't Keep Delaying

People are struggling here and around the world and have been waiting for months for Congress to act. Where is the urgency and the leadership? The new version of the House HEROES Act, put forward in late September, includes about \$10 billion for international development assistance. That's a big step in the right direction, but we must see this effort all the way through. There is no reason for Congress and the Administration to put people's needs on the back burner during this pandemic. And Americans themselves are calling for a global response. According to a recent ONE Campaign poll, "[n]early all voters (87%) say working to stop the global spread of COVID-19 should be a priority for the U.S. And, nearly all voters say it is important for the U.S. to lead the world in responding (85%), preventing (86%), and detecting (85%) global infectious diseases." Your media will continue to put pressure on Congress and the Administration to do their jobs and to do what the American people want.

Write a letter to the editor calling on your members of Congress, by name, to be bold and do something that will make a difference to ease the pain being caused by COVID-19, particularly in low-income countries. This is more urgent than anything else they are doing right now. Help them prioritize this need.

Take Action: Call on Congress to Create a Global Response

Use the EPIC message below to write a letter to the editor and put others in your community into action.

Engage: I'm calling on my senators and representative to protect U.S. investments in global health and demonstrate leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Struggling people have been waiting for months for Congress to pass an emergency COVID-19 response bill. What is Congress not understanding about this emergency?

Problem: The projections are grim. Global hunger may double, and thousands of infants may suffer or die of severe malnutrition. An estimated 80 million children are at risk of vaccine-preventable disease for lack of access to regular health services. AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria cases and deaths are projected to rise to levels we haven't seen in 10-20 years.

Inform: What can be more important for members of Congress right now than attending to this crisis?

Call to Action: I am asking my senator/representative to speak to Senate/House leadership and ask that at least \$20 billion for international development be included in a COVID-19 supplemental bill, including:

- \$4 billion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria over 2 years,
- \$4 billion for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance,
- \$2 billion for anti-hunger efforts, with at least \$500 million for nutrition

I want my legislators to prioritize, get creative, fight, and pass an emergency COVID-19 bill.

Virtual Letter Writing Workshop Agenda

If you want assistance arranging technology for a virtual meeting, contact us at grassroots@results.org. In preparing for your meeting, distribute materials – including the October Action Sheet and [our leave behind document](#) - electronically or do a screen-share in your online platform. Let people know that they will be writing letters so they can be ready with whatever equipment (pen/paper, laptop, tablet) they need. Also, consider delegating pieces of the agenda to members of your group in advance so many can be heard during the meeting.

Below is a sample agenda and script for putting people in your community into action. When people take action, they get inspired. Adapt the 60-minute agenda below.

I. Setting the Stage – 15 Minutes

2 min: Welcome and acknowledge people for being there.

"There are a lot of ways you could be spending this time, and I want to thank all of you for coming out and learning more about how YOU can play a role in the movement to end poverty. Now we can share a bit about why we're here."

3 min: State the purpose of the meeting.

"Our purpose today is to inspire you all about the difference you can make, working with others, to create the political will to end hunger and poverty. In the next few minutes, we'll . . ."

- *Learn a bit about RESULTS, the group organizing this.*
- *Learn about an issue of poverty.*
- *Take powerful action on the issue: we'll be writing letters to the editor.*
- *And, finally, see who is interested in continuing to make a difference with RESULTS."*

10 min: Center the group and do introductions.

"Let's see who has gathered and get in touch with why we are here. Please give us your name and tell us briefly why acting on issue of poverty is important to you."

"Thank you all for sharing what is important to you. We have a lot in common."

II. The Basics of RESULTS – 10 Minutes

“RESULTS is movement of passionate, committed, everyday people. Together we use our voices to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. As volunteers, we receive training, support, and inspiration to become skilled advocates. In time, we learn to effectively advise policy makers, guiding them toward decisions that will improve access to health, education, and economic opportunity. Together we realize the incredible power we possess to use our voices to change the world.” You can also [read our Values Statement](#).

1. Share an example of success: *“We protected development assistance for FY20 after the President proposed cutting it by 30%. We worked with Republicans and Democrats to help secure the highest number ever of congressional supporters ever for AIDS, TB, and malaria; global education; and maternal & child health, sending a message to the President that these programs should be protected and strengthened.”*
2. Share a local example of our role in creating change (perhaps a way in which you moved a legislator to take action).
3. A few more details if you have time:
 - *“RESULTS partners meet twice per month to plan and take action.”*
 - *“During one of our meetings, we connect to a national webinar to learn about an issue, learn to speak powerfully, and take action to influence Congress.”* Give an example.
 - *“We also develop plans for influencing our decision makers through face-to-face meetings, the media, and other community actions.”*

III. Issues and Action Component - 30 Minutes

1. Introduce the issue with a story or video about a request area (not an exhaustive list). This can be done through screen-sharing or just read a story aloud.
 - a. *Global Fund:* <https://tinyurl.com/AIDS2020GF>
 - b. *Gavi:* <https://tinyurl.com/VidforGavi>
2. Read the October Action Sheet together, taking turns paragraph by paragraph - including the EPIC message. Discuss why EPIC is such a great tool for communicating.
3. Using the sample message as a guide, encourage each participant to write a personalized letter.
4. Ask a volunteer to read their letter aloud for positive feedback and encouragement.

IV. Invitation to Attend the Next Meeting & Closing – 5 Minutes

"Lastly, we are planning to have future meetings like this one to guide people in becoming powerful advocates. We'll continue by following up on the meeting(s) we must decide on next steps to take. Who is interested in joining us again to take our next action?"

Say thank you, capture contact information: name, phone, email, address. Add them to your Action Network list and stay in touch with them. Send contact info to Ken Patterson or Lisa Marchal for the RESULTS national database as part of your group's Action Network. Your new people will receive actions on a regular basis. They can also sign up [online](#).

Action Network Message

Please take action to ensure Congress crafts a global response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. [Write to your local media and call for action.](#)