

**Please Join the Bera, Salazar, McCaul, and Meeks Letter to  
Administration Calling for Bold U.S. Leadership at the UN High Level  
Meeting on TB**

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Dear Colleague:

Please join us in calling on the Biden Administration to demonstrate bold U.S. leadership in the fight against tuberculosis (TB) at the UN High Level Meeting (HLM) on TB in September.

Tuberculosis (TB) is largely preventable, treatable, and curable, yet before the COVID-19 pandemic it was the world's biggest infectious killer, claiming more lives each year than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. With progress made in the fight against COVID-19, tuberculosis is now on track to reclaim its shameful top spot as the leading infectious disease killer. In 2021, an estimated 10.6 million people fell sick, and 1.6 million people needlessly lost their lives to this curable disease. TB is the leading killer of people living with HIV and is also responsible for one in three deaths from anti-microbial resistance.

The letter urges the Administration to-

- demonstrate U.S. leadership against TB by bringing ambitious commitments with specific, measurable targets to the HLM;
- develop a whole of government strategy for advancing the global targets to be endorsed at the HLM;
- send high level representation to attend the HLM; and
- encourage other global leaders to bring bold leadership, commitments, and investments to the HLM.

To join, please sign on [via Quill](#). If you have questions please contact Emma Bruce at [Emma.Bruce@mail.house.gov](mailto:Emma.Bruce@mail.house.gov) (Bera) or John-Mark Kolb at [JohnMark.Kolb@mail.house.gov](mailto:JohnMark.Kolb@mail.house.gov) (Salazar).

Sincerely,

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Maria Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress

Michael McCaul  
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress

Dear President Biden:

This September, the United Nations General Assembly will host the second High Level Meeting (HLM) on Tuberculosis. **We hope to see the Administration demonstrate bold U.S. leadership against this deadly disease, bringing ambitious commitments to the HLM and encouraging other global leaders to do the same.**

Tuberculosis (TB) is largely preventable, treatable, and curable, yet before the COVID-19 pandemic it was the world's biggest infectious killer, claiming more lives each year than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. With progress made in the fight against COVID-19, tuberculosis is now on track to reclaim its shameful top spot as the leading infectious disease killer. In 2021, an estimated 10.6 million people fell sick, and 1.6 million people needlessly lost their lives to this curable disease. TB is the leading killer of people living with HIV and is also responsible for one in three deaths from anti-microbial resistance. Without new global action from 2023-2030, the Stop TB Partnership estimates that this scourge will cost \$1 trillion in global economic loss.

At the first UN High Level meeting on TB in 2018, world leaders agreed to a bold set of measurable goals to kickstart the TB response. New funding and ambitious policy change coming out of that meeting started a new era on TB after years of neglect. When COVID-19 hit, U.S.-supported global TB programs became the backbone of the COVID-19 response in many countries. Frontline health workers, lab technicians, epidemiologists, and others quickly adapted their work with PCR testing machines, contact tracing systems, and other longstanding elements of the TB response to tackle the new threat.

However, progress in the fight against TB was massively set back by COVID-19. Lock-downs and the diversion of staff and equipment from the TB response to address the new pandemic threat had devastating consequences for people with TB. In 2020 and 2021, deaths and new cases of TB surged.

TB programs are one of the best platforms we have for respiratory pandemic preparedness and should be strengthened and integrated into primary health care to tackle both current and new threats.

In a time of such incredible opportunity and need, the Administration's bold 3-year commitment to the Global Fund last September must be matched with strengthened bilateral TB programs, and continued diplomatic efforts to draw more partners and resources to the table to fight this airborne killer. **We urge the administration to bring new concrete commitments for ending tuberculosis to the HLM, and to commit to developing a whole of government strategy for advancing the global targets to be endorsed at the HLM.**

In September, we hope to see the highest level representation from the Administration at the UN meeting. At the HLM in 2018, USAID Administrator Mark Green led the U.S. delegation and announced the new "Global Accelerator to End TB," to engage new partners and increase

country commitments and accountability in the global fight against TB. **We strongly urge the Biden Administration to show up at the highest level this year, with bold new commitments reflecting the scale and urgency of the problem.**

As a leader on TB, the U.S. also has a key diplomatic role to play in bringing other countries to the table. USAID and the Department of State should be weighing in with other global leaders – encouraging countries with high burdens of TB to come forward with bold national action plans. **The U.S. must both lead by example by pledging new support to these plans and encourage other donor countries to back up the plans with bold new investments.**

The U.S. and other UN Member States will be negotiating the High Level Meeting's political declaration in the coming weeks, and we urge the Administration to push for a set of bold goals, with specific, measurable targets. These should include:

- A measurable goal to reach everyone sick with TB with quality testing and treatment
- Specific bold new financial commitments to close the global funding gap
- Priority for a human rights and a person-centered approach to the pandemic
- Faster development and broad access to new tools, including diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines
- Commitment to ongoing high-level accountability for the declaration's specific targets

Each element of the declaration should include clear, measurable targets to track progress at both a national and global level.

The same week in September, the UN will be hosting two additional high level meetings on Pandemic Preparedness and Universal Health Coverage. While these meetings happen on different days, it's essential that the Administration not fall into the false choice of TB vs. pandemic prevention or expanding health services. Indeed, these areas must be mutually reinforced.

Infrastructure built for TB with USAID and Global Fund support helped lead the response during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. By strengthening these systems and ensuring they are integrated into primary health care, we can not only better tackle the existing threat of tuberculosis, but also help stop the next pandemic. Seizing these opportunities to overall strengthen global health systems should ground the Administration's approach to the three high level meetings this September.

It is essential that the upcoming High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis produce a meaningful result for the world. **Again, we urge this Administration to prioritize the meeting at the highest levels and to announce in person bold, new commitments for our leadership against tuberculosis.**

Sincerely,