

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

May 15, 2020

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Rogers, and Ranking Member Leahy:

We write to urge you to honor our nation's financial obligations to the United Nations by supporting funding for the organization's peacekeeping, human rights, humanitarian, development, and global health work in Fiscal Year 2021. As organizations that work in a variety of fields relevant to U.S. foreign policy, we firmly believe that American investments in the UN are critical to addressing global challenges in a cost-effective manner.

Right now, the world is facing a deadly crisis that highlights the need for strong and collective multilateral action: the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, the UN system is playing a leading role in the global response. The World Health Organization (WHO) is on the ground in 149 countries working to help public health authorities contain the virus. This includes supporting efforts to improve early detection and contact tracing systems in countries with weak health systems; carrying out awareness raising activities to communicate accurate and timely information; coordinating research and innovation efforts to advance drugs, vaccines and diagnostics, and helping countries scale-up testing and access essential personal protective equipment. In addition, UN peacekeeping missions are using patrols to educate on mitigation measures and pre-positioning testing kits, masks, and protective suits in vulnerable areas. Overall, the thirteen peacekeeping missions are deployed to conflict zones across three continents, protecting civilians from violence, promoting peaceful transitions of power, and separating warring factions, activities taken on even more prominence in the wake of COVID-19.

Other UN agencies are bringing their own equities to the global fight against the novel coronavirus as well. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has published specific guidance calling for government responses that respect "human rights across the spectrum, including economic and social rights, civil and political rights," as well as protecting rights for the most vulnerable and marginalized communities. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is scaling up assistance to refugee camps around the world, places that are uniquely vulnerable to the spread of diseases like COVID-19. UNICEF is supporting health for children and mothers, access to vaccines and immunization, access to clean water and hygiene products, and education. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) supports frontline health care workers and is

strengthening health systems to ensure reproductive and maternal health care and protection from gender-based violence remains accessible. The World Food Programme (WFP) has established an air hub in Ethiopia to distribute vital medical supplies across Africa on behalf of the larger humanitarian community. In addition, in Africa, the existing work of many of these UN agencies is especially vital, as the continent's relatively weak health systems are already overstretched by the high burden of other infectious diseases. For example, the vast majority of global deaths from HIV, measles, and malaria and one in four deaths from tuberculosis are in Africa; we cannot curtail ongoing mitigation efforts or the ramifications of COVID-19 will be even more destructive.

None of these activities would be possible without financial support from the United States. For this reason, we are extremely concerned about mounting budgetary shortfalls that the UN is facing on a number of fronts. On April 1, the UN announced that it is facing a massive liquidity crisis due to the failure of member states, particularly the U.S., to pay its assessments on-time and in-full. The UN regular budget reportedly ended 2019 with \$711 million in member state arrears, of which the U.S. owes \$486 million. This, combined with delays in member state payments of the 2020 assessment, has led the UN to institute counter-productive measures that reduce spending in the short-term but will require far larger expenditures in the long-term. The financial situation is also dire for UN peacekeeping operations.

Since FY'17, Congress and the Administration have enforced an arbitrary 25% cap on U.S. contributions to UN peacekeeping, causing nearly \$1 billion in arrears. There have also been unexplained delays in the disbursement of assessed funding to key UN agencies by the Administration, including the World Health and Food & Agriculture Organizations, even though these funds have already been appropriated by Congress. With respect to WHO, while the agency has welcomed accountability when the crisis abates – as they have done following past international health emergencies – further delays or holds on funding amidst an unprecedented global crisis would be disastrous, given its central role in helping developing countries battle the outbreak and in disseminating information about the virus.

Addressing these challenges requires more U.S. engagement, not less, and that means, in part, meeting our financial commitments to the UN and UN agencies. We therefore ask that, as you craft FY'21 State/Foreign Operations appropriations legislation, you support funding levels for three key UN-related accounts. Specifically, we hope that you will provide \$2.616 billion for the Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account, an amount that will allow us to pay our FY'21 peacekeeping dues at the full assessed rate and pay back arrears. We also request the inclusion of bill language waiving the statutory 25% cap. With regards to other parts of the UN budget, we recommend at least \$1.527 billion for the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO) account, and \$646.5 million for the International Organizations and Programs (IO&P) account. In addition, in any potential COVID-19 emergency supplemental appropriations bill, we urge you to support a robust figure for the International Affairs Budget and as part of that, a proportionate U.S. share of the UN global emergency humanitarian appeal to help protect those people in the most vulnerable countries. If we leave coronavirus to spread freely in vulnerable settings, we would be placing millions at high risk, whole regions will be tipped into chaos and the virus will have the opportunity to circle back around the globe.

Thank you for your leadership and longstanding support for U.S. international affairs programs. We look forward to working with you to ensure strong support for multilateral diplomacy in the coming fiscal year.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
Action Against Hunger
Action on Smoking and Health
AIHMS-Global
AJC (American Jewish Committee)
Alliance for Surgery and Anesthesia Presence (ASAP)
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Jewish World Service
American Leprosy Missions
American Public Health Association
American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene
Americans for UNESCO
Amnesty International USA
Asia Christian Service
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
Catholics for Choice
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
Center for International Policy
Children's HeartLink
Church World Service
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
CORE Group
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Food for the Hungry
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Global Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Friends of Angola
GBCHealth
Georgetown University
Girl Up
Global Health Technologies Coalition
Global Network of Black People Working in HIV
Global Water 2020
Guttmacher Institute
Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc
Helen Keller International
HIV Medicine Association
House of Blahnik, Inc.
Human Rights First
Humanity & Inclusion
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Medical Corps
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
International Women's Health Coalition

International Youth Alliance for Family Planning - IYAFP
Invisible Children
J Street
Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
Living Goods
Management Sciences for Health
Medicines for Humanity
Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship
Mercy-USA for Aid and Development
MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health & Rights
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Nothing But Nets
Nurses Who Vaccinate
PAI Life Sciences Inc.
PATH
Pathfinder International
Peace Action
Physicians for Peace
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Institute
Presbyterian Church USA
Project HOPE
RESULTS
ReSurge International
Shot@Life
The Access Challenge
The Episcopal Church
The Gerontological Society of America
The Hunger Project
The Stimson Center
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
TogetHER for Health
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Universal Access Project
United Nations Association of the USA
What To Expect Project
Women in Global Health
World Education, Inc.