



## **Emergency Funding for a Global Response to COVID-19**

*Congress must support international assistance funding in subsequent COVID-19 relief packages as well as the sharing of excess vaccine doses through the [COVAX initiative](#).*

### **Overview**

The latest relief package that passed in March 2021, which included \$11 billion for foreign assistance funding, was a critical step in the global response to COVID-19. However, as the pandemic surges in countries such as India, Nepal and Ethiopia, major funding gaps remain in the fight to combat COVID-19 and its socio-economic consequences. For example, experts reported that due to the virus's impact on the global food system, [2020 hunger levels](#) reached the highest they have been in five years, and the outlook for 2021 is grim as well.

Additionally, at the current rate of the global COVID-19 vaccine rollout, low-income countries may not receive the vaccine for years to come. Sharing excess vaccine doses and providing additional resources with countries in the greatest need is vital to limit the spread of more COVID-19 variants and the extending detrimental effects of the pandemic.

Retired Admiral Stavridis and General Zinni said it best: "No matter how successful we are in fighting the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic at home, we will never stop it unless we are also fighting it around the world." The Borgen Project is especially concerned about the overall response in Africa, where variants are on the rise while the wait for vaccines continues. Overall, Africa carries 23% of the global disease burden but only accounts for 1% of global health expenditure.

An investment in global health security is an investment in U.S. national security. Contributing to the global COVID-19 response is essential for the U.S. to maintain its global leadership and protect the health, security and economic interests of all Americans in addition to the global community.

### **Additional Global Emergency Needs**

International financial institutions have established new funds to address the crushing economic and financial challenges from COVID-19. However, development and global health experts have identified increased emergency needs and insufficient existing U.S. international affairs resources in the following areas: In global health, there is an urgent need for greater COVID-19 surveillance, equipment, personnel, testing and laboratory capacity to save lives and contain the spread of the virus.

Increased resources would also help maintain essential health services by contributing to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. In addition to the rise in hunger levels, our frontline operational response to COVID-19 and protecting Americans abroad could be disrupted by a severe shortfall in fee revenue to the Department of State operations. As such, the U.S. humanitarian response must be scaled up to protect vulnerable populations and provide food, nutrition and access to local markets and community-based livelihood programs.