

June 4, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to you regarding the urgent crisis of vaccine equity in the world and to urge you to take aggressive and immediate steps to ensure vaccines are quickly administered in countries around the world to mitigate COVID-19 globally. We appreciate the steps you have already taken, including your support of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) temporary waiver for COVID-19 vaccines at the World Trade Organization, and we look forward to working with you to secure its adoption. We also applaud your commitment to sending a total of 80 million doses of FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines to countries battling the pandemic by the end of June. These are important steps forward. However, much more must be done. We urge you to pursue additional steps to advance a bold, comprehensive strategy to vaccinate the world as quickly as possible.

As you know, wealthy countries have administered more than 80 percent of global vaccines while low-income countries have received just 0.3 percent.<sup>1</sup> *The New York Times* editorial board recently issued a dire warning that “without a major course correction, the rest of the world will have to wait until 2023 or later for large-scale vaccination initiatives”—a preventable humanitarian catastrophe that heightens the risk of the emergence of a vaccine-resistant viral strain that could impact all Americans.<sup>2</sup>

We are ready to partner with your administration on the following five measures to achieve our shared goal of a rapid and equitable global vaccination program:

- Ensure the immediate release of the 80 million doses of the vaccine. Currently, we understand that countries experiencing immediate surges have not received sufficient doses. It is imperative that the committed doses are allocated—based on where surging numbers are greatest—immediately. We also urge you to reassess our stockpile of vaccines to release even more vaccines immediately to countries around the world.
- Invest an additional \$25 billion in the Build Back Better agenda to authorize the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to oversee the production of 8 billion mRNA vaccine doses, sufficient to vaccinate half the world. This is one of the quickest ways to increase the immediate supply of vaccines globally. We ask that you provide an immediate accounting of the remainder of \$16 billion in American Rescue Plan funds allocated for vaccine

---

<sup>1</sup> Ghebreyesus, Tedros A. (April 22, 2021). *I Run the W.H.O., and I know That Rich Countries Must Make a Choice*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/22/opinion/who-covid-vaccines.html>

<sup>2</sup> The Editorial Board. (May 14, 2021). *America Is Failing Its Moral Test on Vaccines*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/14/opinion/biden-covid-vaccines-world-india.html>

development, manufacturing, distribution, and supply chains, and utilize that to immediately deploy toward expanding production.

- Use all available tools of U.S. influence, persuasion, diplomacy and legal authorities to facilitate the rapid and widespread transfer of technology and expansion of vaccine production, including: directing the National Institutes of Health to participate in the World Health Organization's (WHO's) COVID-19 Technology Access Pool program; identifying and supporting suitable firms and facilities worldwide that have sought licensing agreements to manufacture vaccines but have been rebuffed;<sup>3</sup> and negotiating and securing vaccine licensing agreements with existing manufacturers to enable broad sharing of vaccine technology and industrial processes to scale up production, recognizing the potential leverage afforded by the Defense Production Act, the Bayh-Dole Act, and 28 U.S.C. § 1498 for U.S.-owned patents on mRNA vaccine innovation.
- Support a new issuance of Special Drawing Rights—a cost-free International Monetary Fund reserve asset—to help strengthen public-health budgets worldwide and provide low-income countries with resources to import medical supplies and carry out vaccination campaigns, building on the \$650 billion global allocation expected to be issued in August. This should be paired with support through the State Department, USAID, and U.S. membership at the WHO, UNICEF, and other agencies to help expand developing countries' technical capacities and health infrastructure to universally administer vaccines.
- Convene a global vaccine summit with world leaders—allies and adversaries alike—to spur cooperation and coordination in the development, production and distribution of vaccines, encouraging research transparency, open access, and global collaboration in engineering and manufacturing with a goal of accelerating universal vaccination.

There are numerous reasons to engage immediately and aggressively in showing strong leadership in helping to vaccinate the world. First, from a public health perspective, if we are to defeat the virus, we cannot allow the continued surges globally because the virus knows no geographic boundaries and the public health of Americans is at risk. Second, the humanitarian and economic implications of a needlessly prolonged, years-long global pandemic are dire, as explosive surges of infections and deaths in India and Brazil—and the spread of new highly infectious variants—demonstrate. Not only will many more hundreds of thousands die from COVID-19 but tens of millions more will experience increased poverty, hunger, and instability. Third, this is a prime opportunity to strengthen diplomatic relationships, and to show people around the world that America is a power that comes to their aid when they are in need, and a country that still does big and great things.

The world cannot wait. It is imperative that the United States act quickly and deploy every tool in our arsenal. Now is the time to build international cooperation and solidarity in ways we have never seen before, including using the full force of U.S. diplomacy, economic and commercial leadership, legal authorities, and membership in multilateral institutions. The fate of our own health and safety in the U.S.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ashleigh Furlong (May 14, 2021). *Big vaccine makers reject offers to help produce more jabs*. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/vaccine-producers-reject-offers-to-make-more-jabs/>

is inextricably connected to the wellbeing and protection of the most vulnerable among us worldwide. We look forward to collaborating with you on this shared priority.

Sincerely,

PRAMILA JAYAPAL

Member of Congress

TOM MALINOWSKI

Member of Congress

RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY

Member of Congress