

May 9, 2022

Dear Mr President,

The Second Global COVID-19 Summit is taking place at a pivotal moment in the pandemic response. We are writing to urge you to act with reinvigorated urgency to increase the US government's financial commitments, help set bold coverage targets for vaccination, testing, treatment and care, and announce unequivocal support for policies that will enable equitable access to the fruits of scientific progress – and to issue a clarion call for comparable political and financial commitments from the global community. Attached are high-level recommendations that provide greater detail on these key action areas.

According to new World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, a staggering 15 million people have died directly and indirectly from COVID-19; over half of these deaths are estimated to have occurred in low and lower-middle income countries. This enormous death toll is caused by gross, preventable inequities in access to life-saving interventions. Although effective vaccines have been available for almost 18 months, only 15% of people in low-income countries have received even the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Six out of seven COVID-19 infections are undetected in Africa and only 41 countries in the world have testing rates higher than the global target rate of 1 per 1,000 people per day—a target that is itself insufficient. The global supply of novel oral antivirals for early outpatient treatment of COVID-19, such as nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid), is woefully inadequate with available doses being claimed by wealthy countries while pricing of these treatments in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) remains exorbitantly high or non-transparent. This piecemeal response is prolonging the pandemic; instead, a comprehensive approach that covers delivery of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of COVID-19 is essential.

The U.S. Government's lack of leadership in response to this current reality is alarming and shortsighted. Our understanding is that you do not intend to appear in-person for the Summit for which you called. Lack of engagement and commitment to a global strategy holds clear and present dangers for the U.S. and the world.

Commitments agreed upon during the first Global COVID-19 Summit have been broken or are not on track to be met, such as the promise to vaccinate 70% of the world in time for the 2022 UN General Assembly. The US government and other global leaders are failing to fill major gaps in funding needed to ensure access to and delivery of life-saving COVID-19 tests, treatments, vaccines, and other interventions. Instead of ensuring sufficient funding for purchasing vaccines doses as well as robust vaccination campaigns and allocation of supplies including oxygen and personal protective equipment, funds were taken away from the latter to pay for the former creating an unnecessary and dangerous trade-off. Rates of illness, death and new infections demonstrate the danger in this approach. Letting the pandemic rage on, unfettered, is not acceptable.

The time is long overdue to marshal the necessary financial, technical, and political resources to address these deadly gaps in access to essential COVID-19 tools and technologies, and enact large-scale country-led and evidence-based programs that integrate delivery of testing, treatment, and vaccination as part of routine health services, including at the primary health care and community levels.

Failure is not an option. The Global Summit must be a turning point for US leadership in the response to global COVID-19.

Sincerely,

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[List in formation]

ACT UP Philadelphia (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)
African Services Committee
American Jewish World Service
AVAC
Be A Hero
Black Activists Rising Against the Cuts (BARAC UK)
Center for Popular Democracy (CPD)
Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA)
DARE
Doctors for America
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)
Global Black Gay Men Connect (GBGMC)
Health GAP
Justice is Global
Partners In Health
People's Action
PrEP4All
Public Citizen
Marked by COVID
Medical Impact
Metro New York Health Care for All
New York Trade Justice Coalition
Oxfam America
RESULTS
Rethink Trade
Revolving Door Project
Right to Health Action
Rise and Resist
The Campaign To End Covid Now
Trade Justice Network
Treatment Action Campaign, South Africa (TAC)
Treatment Action Group
Universities Allied for Access to Essential Medicines (UAEM)
Yale Global Health Justice Partnership
Lawrence Gostin, Faculty Director, O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law and Director,
WHO Collaborating Center on National & Global Health Law
Dr. Madhukar Pai, Canada Research Chair in Epidemiology & Global Health, McGill University
Dr. Linda-Gail Bekker, CEO, Desmond Tutu Health Foundation
Dr. Chris Beyrer, Desmond M. Tutu Professor; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Dr. Stephen Gloyd, Professor, Department of Global Health, Schools of Public Health and Medicine, University of Washington

Tian Johnson, Founder, The African Alliance, and Community Engagement Co-Chair: African CDC - COVID-19 African Vaccine Delivery Alliance (AVDA)

Dr. Kenneth Mayer, Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Professor, Department of Global Health and Population, Harvard University

Dr. Francois-Xavier MBOPI-KEOU, Professor of Laboratory Medicine, Infectious Diseases and Global Health and Chair, Department of Microbiology, Parasitology, Haematology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases; University of Yaoundé

Dre Joanne Liu, Professor at the School and Population and Global Health, McGill, Director of the Pandemics and Health Emergencies Readiness Lab