

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C St, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Gloria Steele  
Acting Administrator  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Secretary Blinken and Acting Administrator Steele,

This is a time of unprecedented crises, but we know that you are bringing the best of America's expertise in defeating the COVID-19 pandemic and preventing future outbreaks. We are encouraged by the Biden administration's support for global health security and recognition that global health security is national security. We are particularly glad to see, in a recent National Security Directive released by the White House, a provision directing the Secretary of State and the Secretary of HHS to develop a plan to engage with and strengthen multilateral COVID-19 initiatives "such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations," or CEPI. We were also pleased to see President Biden sign the American Rescue Plan into law on March 11<sup>th</sup>, which includes funding for "a contribution to a multilateral vaccine development partnership to support epidemic preparedness." In addition to this important emergency funding, we urge you to request regular funding for CEPI in your Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request to Congress.

As you know, CEPI is a public-private partnership dedicated to developing and bringing to manufacture vaccines and vaccine technology to combat diseases with epidemic and pandemic potential. In the fight against COVID-19, they have raised over \$1.1 billion and invested in 12 vaccine candidates. They provided early catalytic funding in the Moderna vaccine, spurring its initial development, and are a major investor in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, both which are among the first vaccines to be brought to bear against this catastrophic pandemic. And this month, CEPI has announced a groundbreaking \$3.5 billion plan to break the cycle of panic and neglect that has characterized our response to epidemic and pandemic disease.

While not historically a contributor to CEPI, in the fall, the United States Agency for International Development entered into a small cooperative agreement with CEPI to fund some its work combatting Lassa fever, Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), Nipah, Chikungunya, Rift Valley Fever, and Ebola. This is an important first step but more needs to be done.

Including a request for funding for CEPI in your administration's budget would enable Congress to appropriate funds specifically to CEPI, as it does for other international organizations like

Gavi and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Such an action is supported by a wide variety of global health experts and is a key recommendation of the CSIS Commission on Strengthening America's Health Security, a report authored by many of the senior global health officials now working in the Biden administration.

Within Congress, we are working for U.S. participation and funding of CEPI, specifically the bipartisan *Securing America From Epidemics Act*, which passed the House of Representatives three times in 2020 and was again reported favorably by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 25, 2021. Leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have also expressed support for U.S. participation and funding of CEPI in global health legislation.

We believe that participating in and providing funds for CEPI will enable the world to defeat COVID-19 faster and more effectively, strengthening America's health and economic security. We also know that even as CEPI continues its fight against COVID-19, it is looking for the next threat to our health security. We have now invested billions in the vaccines and vaccine technologies, enabling a quantum leap in the fight against emerging infectious disease. With these recent advances in vaccine technology and with a modest investment, CEPI will be able to develop vaccines for a wide variety of infectious disease threats before they ever become outbreaks, let alone epidemics or pandemics.


The United States can and should participate in these efforts. Requesting funds for CEPI will enable the U.S. to fund and contribute to the ever-shifting fight against COVID-19 and to invest in solutions to respond to or even prevent the next pandemic.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you on this and many other critical issues.

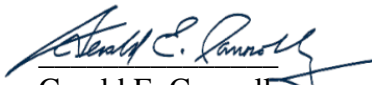
Sincerely,



Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



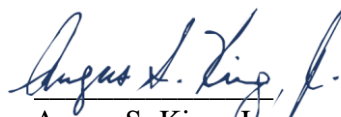
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

cc:

Shalanda Young, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget