



**Project HOPE**  
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**President Joe Biden, United States of America &  
Vice President Kamala Harris, United States of America**

*January 21, 2021*

Dear Mr. President & Madame Vice President:

As the United States of America moves to address urgent global health needs, Project HOPE welcomes your new administration and supports immediate actions as a partner in global health.

From the COVID-19 crisis to deep, longstanding health equity gaps it spotlights, decisions made from the start of your administration are opportunities to solve today's health problems and make progress on greatest challenges facing generations to come. We commend your immediate moves to mitigate the pandemic, restore U.S. leadership in global health by remaining with the World Health Organization (WHO), and advance climate solutions by rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement. Your immediate actions inspire optimism and align with our global health and humanitarian agenda. Today's unveiling of your National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response & Pandemic Preparedness is a great step forward.

COVID-19 has taught us the massive costs of neglecting global health. It shows us that infectious diseases can be deadlier than terrorist threats and wars. By investing in global health security, we can help prevent future threats and bolster our economic and political stability at home and around the world. Now is the time to invest in life-saving global health agenda aspects stymied or sidelined by COVID-19. Working collaboratively with the global community, the U.S. can prevent maternal and child deaths and help achieve sustainable control of HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and non-communicable diseases. We advocate reinvesting in USAID and welcome Samantha Power as your appointed leader. She is highly qualified to staff USAID with top professionals focused on humanitarian and development needs.

**This time of greatest challenges is a time of opportunities. Together, we will build back better.**

We propose four recommendations:

**End the COVID-19 crisis with a vaccination program that is both domestic and global in nature and comprehensive, equitable & coordinated. Prioritize pandemic preparedness to prevent future catastrophes.** No one is safe until everyone is safe from COVID-19. Meet goals to optimize COVID-19 vaccine deployment domestically and internationally. We applaud your executive order to reverse U.S. withdrawal from WHO. We strongly support your directive that includes U.S. intent to join COVAX and support the ACT-Accelerator to advance multilateral efforts for COVID-19 vaccine, therapeutic, diagnostic distribution, equitable access, research and development. We must address vaccine science and hesitancy issues. Invest in training local vaccinators to ensure they can use any type of vaccine. Involve community vaccinators that have access to hard-to-reach and remote areas to ensure wide access. Access and health equity are paramount. Domestically, everyone, must have access to vaccination and treatment to ensure that vulnerable and disenfranchised communities have equal access. Prioritize the importance of strong health systems. Importantly, devise and deploy a Five-Point Pandemic Preparedness Plan to protect the nation and world from future pandemics. Plan pillars must include: a well-trained workforce, a protected workforce with ample PPE, strong monitoring systems for outbreaks, prepositioned response equipment and resources, and scientific labs equipped to detect and analyze diseases.



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**Close health equity gaps that disproportionately harm women, Black, Latino & Indigenous Peoples, migrants, and refugees globally.** COVID-19 casts a spotlight on systemic inequities in global health, just as health risks like diabetes, heart disease and mental illnesses harm some communities exponentially more than others. Prioritize local investments in local health workers and health systems to advance culturally competent care. We are encouraged by your administration's commitment to representation and inspired by you, Vice President Harris, as the first woman, Black and South Asian-American in your role. The diversity of your cabinet—the most diverse Presidential cabinet in U.S. history to date—will serve the multicultural fabric of America and our vibrant global community.

**Address the global health workforce shortage through investments & innovation.** Just as global public health crises are demanding more from health workers than ever, our world faces a global health worker shortage estimated to reach 18 million by 2030. To achieve Sustainable Development Goals, we must invest in strategies to bolster our health workforce. As witnessed over the last year, nurses and doctors in the U.S. and around the world have been our frontline responders fighting COVID-19. Several thousand health care workers paid the ultimate price and lost their lives, and millions face the life-transforming toll of conducting superhuman work through maxed-capacity conditions, witnessing unthinkable levels of loss. We must prioritize training, protecting and supporting health workers while building health system capacity. We need a Marshall Plan for coordinated global health workforce development.

**Anticipate and reduce health risks caused by climate change; build community resilience.** Climate change impacts threaten individual and public health. We must prepare for and mitigate humanitarian emergencies tied to increasingly severe droughts, storms, floods, hurricanes and wildfires, and the spread of vector-borne diseases like Zika and Malaria into new areas. Climate change also increases the risk of armed conflict, forcing people to flee and jeopardizing their access to health care services and other basic services.

Thank you, Mr. President and Madame Vice President, for your commitment to policies that prioritize people, science, global collaboration and health equity. Your actions are essential to our mission: placing power in the hands of local health workers to save lives around the world. Since our founding in 1958, Project HOPE has responded in areas of greatest need to realize our vision: health opportunities for people everywhere. We are honored and ready to collaborate with your administration and allies to solve current global health problems and build a brighter, healthier, safer future for all.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Torbay", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rabih Torbay  
President & CEO, Project HOPE