

Action Sheet

FEBRUARY 2021

Almighty God, we pray that our Lenten journey may be fruitful for drawing closer to you and our neighbor.

SKILL-BUILDING ACTION

The Global Child Thrive Act passed into law thanks to your commitment to building relationships with Congress. Building upon our work supporting the most vulnerable, such as refugees and those facing hunger, we shift our focus to the COVID-19 Supplemental Funding. This emergency funding will require U.S. leadership to prioritize both a domestic and international response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Action Sheet action this month is to write personal emails to our senators urging them to support at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package in order to help protect the most vulnerable and foster a more sustainable recovery in the years to come.

LASER TALK

The COVID-19 virus has caused the largest pandemic since 1918. As of January 2021, we've lost two million of our sisters and brothers globally and more than 100 million have been infected. We must address the immense needs in our local communities, and we cannot turn away from global suffering.

The World Bank estimates COVID-19 will cause extreme poverty to rise globally for the first time in 20 years with 110 to 150 million people falling into extreme poverty in 2021. 270 million people will require food assistance this year, almost double the need in 2019. Our faith compels us to protect the world's most vulnerable, such as refugees and families experiencing hunger, from the pandemic's impacts on health systems, food security and livelihoods. Governments and partnering organizations can accelerate an end to the pandemic and foster a more sustainable recovery by addressing the immediate health crisis and strengthening resilience.

Will you support providing at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package? This emergency funding can help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on people's food security and livelihoods ensuring that decades of development gains are not lost.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 continues to devastate families and communities across the United States and around the world. In the United States, the immediate health crisis must be addressed. Communities of color have been especially hard hit as increased unemployment and food insecurity are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our response as a nation must also address global need. In the developing world, where families and communities face daunting barriers to accessing needed services, the impacts on livelihoods and hunger are catastrophic.

Lead the Way on Hunger and COVID-19:

CRS' Lead the Way on Hunger campaign calls forth a vision where all people have the conditions they need to regularly access healthy food, ensuring optimal nutrition needed to thrive. In January 2021, the Global Child Thrive Act passed into law

with the support of CRS chapter members.¹ It directs the U.S. Administration to integrate early childhood development (ECD) activities into the U.S. government's international development and humanitarian programs. Without requiring additional funding, it makes every U.S. dollar invested abroad more effective in combatting the impacts of COVID-19 and supporting families in need.

To continue supporting the needs of vulnerable children, families and communities, the USCCB and the international NGO community are urging Congress to provide at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package. These additional resources would help meet immediate health needs and mitigate the humanitarian, economic and social impacts of the pandemic.² This funding should 1) be flexible to ensure that the administration can expeditiously allocate resources to communities in need and 2) be made available to organizations that can most effectively and efficiently support vulnerable populations.

The effects of COVID-19 are only intensifying. The World Bank estimates that COVID-19 will cause global extreme poverty to rise for the first time in 20 years and estimates there could be 110 to 150 million people falling back into extreme poverty in 2021.³ In addition, 270 million people will require food assistance this year, more than double the need in 2019. The World Food Program continues to warn that famine is looming in several countries in crisis.⁴ This not only jeopardizes the opportunity for millions to thrive, but also threatens to undermine decades of developmental progress.

Emergency funding will support organizations and local governments to partner with programs that meet basic needs, including nutrition and food security projects. Supporting at least \$20 billion in international assistance now, will help protect the most vulnerable, and foster a more sustainable recovery in the years to come.

Read [COVID-19 and Hunger](#) to learn more about CRS' response to COVID-19 in South Sudan, Guatemala and the Philippines.

TAKE ACTION: Write personal emails to your U.S. Senators

- 1. Go to the website of your U.S. Senators to see how they want you to email them** (e.g., by filling out an online form on their website or by emailing a specific email address).
- 2. Introduce yourself:** Share about your connections and activity in the local community, including your involvement as a CRS chapter/club member. Briefly describe how you've engaged with the office in the past.
- 3. Share your excitement:** Express why you are looking forward to continue or begin working with this senator in the 117th Congress. Mention how you felt inspired by the incredible news of Congress passing the Global Child Thrive Act into law, prioritizing the dignity of children and families around the world.
- 4. Make the ask:** To continue supporting the needs of vulnerable children, families and communities, ask your U.S. Senators to ensure at least \$20 billion is provided for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package. Ask them to let you know if they will speak to Senate Leadership and urge them to support this much needed emergency funding.
- 5. Provide some background to support your argument:** In your own words, share why it is important that our nation prioritizes a global response to the pandemic. Then, share how at least \$20 billion in supplemental funding can support local governments and partnering organizations in addressing the immediate health crisis and mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable families and communities. Visit the body of this Action Sheet to support your argument.
- 6. Repeat the 'ask', say thank you, and request a response:** Leave your name, address, phone number and email address so they can get back to you with their decision.

¹ [CRS Celebrates the Global Child Thrive Act's Passage into Law](#). Catholic Relief Services, 1 January 2021. Press release.

² [InterAction Statement Urging Congress to Appropriate \\$20 Billion for COVID-19 Response](#). InterAction, 24 July 2020. Press release.

³ [COVID-19 to Add as Many as 150 Million Extreme Poor by 2021](#). World Bank, 7 October 2020. Press release.

⁴ [COVID-19 will double number of people facing food crises unless swift action is taken](#). World Food Program, 21 April 2020. Press release.