

# Action Sheet

MARCH 2021

*Loving Creator, as we look forward to the promise of the resurrection, we pray and commit our Lenten journey to ensuring all your children have enough food and support to build their dreams.*

## SKILL AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTION

The next COVID-19 supplemental funding package is anticipated to pass Congress before March 14<sup>th</sup>, when unemployment support expires. Our Action Sheet action this month is to write letters to the editor focused on your senators and the COVID-19 supplemental funding package. **Your message will depend on if you are writing and submitting your letter to the editor before or after this next COVID-19 supplemental funding package passes Congress.** See additional information below.

## LASER TALK

The COVID-19 virus has caused the largest pandemic since 1918. As of February 2021, we've lost more than 2.5 million of our sisters and brothers globally and more than 112 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. 265 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.

At least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package, anticipated to pass before March 14th, is needed. 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. More than 2.5 million deaths have been reported globally. However, data shows that in the United States there is an undercounting of cases and deaths by potentially 4 to 5 times and by up to 20 times globally.<sup>1</sup> 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 are also catastrophic. WHO staff remind, "it's not just COVID-19 that is killing people, it's underprivilege, it's lack of access, it's years of living with health conditions that haven't been properly managed because of the colour of your skin, or your ethnicity, or your social group."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [WHO: 10% of world's people may have been infected with virus.](#) AP News. 5 October 2020. Press release.

<sup>2</sup> [Dr. Mike Ryan of World Health Organization statement.](#) 28 December 2020. Press Conference.

## Lead the Way on Hunger and COVID-19:

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.<sup>3</sup> Globally, 345 million full-time jobs were lost between July and September 2020, making it so much harder to put food on the table.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the 135 million people already facing food insecurity, an additional 130 million are expected to become acutely food insecure this year. The World Food Program continues to warn that famine is looming in several countries in crisis.<sup>5</sup> This not only jeopardizes the opportunity for millions to thrive, but also threatens decades of developmental progress. But we don't have to feel hopeless. We can use our voices to make addressing the need a higher priority in meetings with our members of Congress and in our letters to the editor.

CRS' Lead the Way on Hunger campaign calls forth a vision where all people have the conditions they need to regularly access healthy food to ensure optimal nutrition needed to thrive. To continue supporting the needs of vulnerable children, families and communities, the USCCB and the international NGO community have been urging Congress to provide at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in the next supplemental package. This emergency funding would help meet immediate health needs and mitigate the humanitarian, economic and social impacts of the pandemic by protecting the most vulnerable and fostering a more sustainable recovery in the future.<sup>6</sup> Once the current supplemental package passes, there will be a pause in asks regarding additional funding during which the international NGO community works with its in-country partners to evaluate the continuing needs and determine what amount of additional funding is needed to address those needs.

Explore the [CRS Rice Bowl Stories of Hope](#) to see CRS' interventions come to life in Madagascar, El Salvador and Timor-Leste.

## TAKE ACTION: Write a letter to the editor focused on your U.S. senators

- 1. Find the local newspaper you will target:** To learn what is required for letters to the editor, Google the following: "(Name of the paper) letters to the editor guidelines." Identify the word limit and submission method (i.e., via the website or email).
- 2. Think about the placement of the piece:** If you are writing to a daily newspaper, find an article or editorial that provides an entry point to discuss the need to care for vulnerable families and communities amidst this pandemic. If you are writing to a smaller weekly paper, write in a way that would be of interest to local readers.
- 3. Research:** Read a few letters to the editor in the newspaper you are targeting to see how they begin and the general tone.
- 4. Write your letter to the editor:** Using the newspaper's guidelines and this Action Sheet's information, identify yourself and share what values or experiences move you to work to support the world's most vulnerable individuals. Have another chapter member provide some edits for your letter. Find additional guidance in this [letter to the editor training](#) (40:20 mark).
- 5. Include your specific message:** *Use the legislative update emails and points below to evaluate and craft your message.*
  - If you are writing and submitting a letter to the editor **before** Congress passes the COVID-19 supplemental funding (anticipated no later than March 14<sup>th</sup>), urge your senators to support at least \$20 billion for the international response to COVID-19 in this next supplemental package.
  - If you are writing a letter to the editor **after** Congress passes the COVID supplemental funding, 1) acknowledge the amount of funding that was included for the international response to COVID-19, 2) express gratitude that Congress included this amount of money and 3) name your members of Congress and share that as the international NGO community is assessing ongoing needs, you will continue to share how to support ongoing needs.
- 6. Report back and celebrate:** If your letter is published, contact your CRS representative, share it on social media tagging your members of Congress, send it to your members of Congress by email and have your chapter's liaison call the key aide to make sure they saw it! If it's not published, consider editing it, if needed, and sending it to another newspaper.

---

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

<sup>4</sup> [ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition](#). International Labour Organization. 23 September 2020.

<sup>5</sup> [COVID-19 will double number of people facing food crises unless swift action is taken](#). World Food Program, 21 April 2020. Press release.

<sup>6</sup> [InterAction Statement Urging Congress to Appropriate \\$20 Billion for COVID-19 Response](#). InterAction, 24 July 2020. Press release.