

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write today ahead of this week's emergency G20 virtual meeting to urge you to make specific, time-bound commitments with world leaders and heads of state to respond to the growing threat of the Coronavirus pandemic. This virus knows no borders, making multilateral cooperation, coordination and collective action urgent.

This pandemic is not a challenge that we can face alone; we must work through every multilateral institution in which we participate. Such organizations and institutions have a track record of facilitating cooperation during moments of crisis, from international transportation and air travel reform after 9/11, to committing trillions of dollars in fiscal stimulus after the global financial crisis in 2008. The current Coronavirus pandemic is such a moment. The G20 was established to coordinate policies that encourage economic stability and growth, as well as respond to financial crises and disasters. And for the G20 to address the global economic consequences of COVID-19 most effectively, the United States must once again lead the way.

First, the United States must ensure that organizations such as the World Health Organization and GAVI, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations, are fully funded and empowered to complete their missions. Reports show that, as of last Friday, the WHO has received less than 25 percent of its necessary funds. Not only must the United States expeditiously contribute its share of necessary funding to these organizations, we must urge other members of the G20 to do the same. With respect to GAVI, laying the groundwork now is critical in ensuring that, when a vaccine is developed, it can be distributed in sufficient quantities and made widely available.

Second, the United States must make certain that the global economy has the tools needed to recover. The G20, covering 90% of the world's GDP, is the single most important international or multilateral body to deal with the immediate economic threat that this virus poses. Immediately, the G20 should follow their emergency model during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, when the Finance Ministers meetings process was elevated to the leader-level and heads of state – who hold the political capital necessary to make tough decisions – who took the reins on all economic decision-making. Additionally, the G20 must agree to temporarily lift import duties on critical medical equipment, supplies and commodities needed for doctors and medical personnel to combat this virus, to lower costs and speed delivery of life saving good. These actions are crucial in ensuring the most effective economic response.

Furthermore, the G20 should commit to fully resourcing the IMF and the World Bank, along with the Multilateral Development Banks, and expand the availability of pandemic preparedness and recovery funds so these institutions can carry out their missions to drive economic stability and development, and recovery. These measures are especially needed for low and middle income countries, which are most at risk for devastating financial impacts from this virus. The international financial institutions will be key in the reconstruction phase after the worst of this virus passes.

We must unite to combat this virus and the lasting impacts it will have on our citizens' health and economic well-being. We must put aside political differences. Now is the time for action.

We urge you to restore American leadership at these multilateral institutions, which has historically led the world through many crises over the past century. There is no time to waste. That's why this week's G20 meeting is so crucial. We hope you will show the world that America will once again rise to the challenge.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator