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# Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

20 August 2021

English only

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## 2020 Meeting

Geneva, 22-25 November 2021

## Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X

Geneva, 30-31 August 2021

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Development of guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources, including financial resources on a voluntary basis to address gaps and needs

## Contributions to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Submitted by the United States

*“And from the beginning of my presidency, we have been clear-eyed that we need to attack this virus globally as well. This is about our responsibility – our humanitarian obligation to save as many lives as we can – and our responsibility to our values. We value the inherent dignity of all people. In times of trouble, Americans reach out to offer help and to offer a helping hand. That’s who we are.” – President Joe Biden*

### I. Background

1. The United States’ commitment to the aims of Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention, which calls on Parties to “cooperate in contributing individually or together with other States or international organizations to the further development and application of scientific discoveries in the field of bacteriology (biology) for prevention of disease,” is reflected in our approach to ending the global COVID-19 pandemic and preventing future pandemics and other health security threats. We are leading global efforts to mitigate COVID-19 because it is the right thing to do. It is the right thing morally, the right thing from a global public health perspective, and the right thing for our collective national and economic security and well-being.

2. The United States’ global efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic include, inter alia: accelerating widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-



19 vaccinations; seeking to reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 and mitigate transmission; and strengthening health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to COVID-19 and future pandemic threats. We are also working to mitigate the pandemic's toll on societies by minimizing household shocks, building resilience, and bolstering economies and other critical systems under stress due to COVID-19 to enable recovery. We are partnering with other countries and international organizations and networks to strengthen the global health security architecture, increase sustainable health security financing, and build the capabilities and capacity necessary to prevent, detect, and respond to future pandemics and biological threats.

3. The United States provides exchange, cooperation, and assistance relevant to Article X of the BWC in a variety of ways. These can be bilateral between countries; through national contributions to international organizations; and by individuals, industry, foundations, and academia, all of which are critical players in American civil society. The U.S. global COVID-19 response exemplifies all these mechanisms. The breadth and scope of U.S. international assistance during the global COVID-19 response is extensive, and this paper describes a range of activities that collectively demonstrate our full commitment to ending the COVID-19 pandemic and, more broadly, to enhancing the international community's ability to prepare for and respond to biological threats. It illustrates the need for a broad and flexible approach to mobilizing resources for global public health events.

## II. The United States' COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework

4. The United States' COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework outlines the goals, key areas of action, and lines of effort to guide the government agencies leading our global response. This Framework was developed by experts in pandemic response and epidemiology, health and humanitarian crisis response, economic policy and international development, and global health and global health security. It builds on existing U.S. programs, which were adapted to respond to the pandemic, on new funding specifically for the COVID-19 global response, and on ongoing diplomacy and international coordination with partners to meet the immense challenges to end the pandemic and support recovery.

5. The key goals of the U.S. COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework are to end the pandemic, mitigate the wide-reaching consequences from the pandemic, and build back better - including preparedness and response capacities for future biological threats, whether natural, accidental, or deliberate. To achieve these goals, the U.S. is focused on the following lines of effort, underscored by a renewed commitment to multilateralism and partnerships; diversity, equity, and inclusion; evidence-based and science-based decisions; and transparency and accountability:

- **Accelerate vaccination of the most vulnerable:** Accelerate widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations, to get shots into arms in all eligible populations and stop the virus from spreading and mutating.
- **Save lives now:** Reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 and mitigate transmission, including by supporting clinical and public health interventions, and strengthen health systems, including efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to pandemic threats.
- **Fight acute impacts:** Address acute needs driven by COVID-19, mitigate household shocks, and build resilience, including where the pandemic has had both acute impacts and those that threaten long-term setbacks.

- **Address systemic risks:** Bolster economies and other critical systems under stress due to COVID-19 to prevent backsliding and enable recovery, including to limit the fallout of macroeconomic and other instabilities.
- **Build back a better world by advancing health security:** Strengthen the international health security architecture and build the capacities needed to prevent, detect, and respond to pandemic threats, including by increasing preparedness; addressing global health security financing, incentives, norms, and governance gaps and weaknesses; and strengthening the World Health Organization and other critical international institutions and multilateral organizations.

### **III. Leading the world in the COVID-19 response through international partnership**

6. The United States is dedicating significant resources to reducing morbidity and mortality from COVID-19; mitigating the risk of disease transmission; and strengthening health systems to prepare for and counter pandemic and other health security threats.

7. Through the American Rescue Plan Act, the U.S. Congress has provided more than \$11.5 billion to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of State, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to bolster the international COVID-19 response. This funding is critical to extending and strengthening U.S. efforts to fight the pandemic at home and abroad by ensuring there are resources to respond to urgent humanitarian needs; address devastating social and economic impacts; mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; and support multilateral efforts and international organizations in this fight. This builds on more than \$140 billion in global health investments over the last two decades, including through programs like the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Existing programs have pivoted in part to support pandemic response and ongoing diplomacy and international coordination to meet these immense challenges. As one example of harnessing existing programs and partnerships to amplify the COVID-19 response, the Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program provided \$12.8 million to support partner nations' responses with diagnostic testing supplies, decontamination and disinfection supplies, and virtual training. Additionally, through PEPFAR, the U.S. government has provided nearly \$250 million to support COVID-19 response in 49 countries. PEPFAR support addresses urgent commodity needs due to COVID-19; supports vaccination efforts and control capacities to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19; and mitigates the impact of COVID-19 on health systems and programs to address HIV/AIDS.

### **IV. Mobilizing resources in support of international vaccine access and production**

8. The United States is accelerating widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19. We have contributed \$4 billion to Gavi in support of COVAX – the largest single contribution of any donor. \$3.5 billion of our contribution supports vaccine procurement, with an additional \$500 million for vaccine readiness and delivery. Our contributions support the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to support procurement, delivery, and in-country technical assistance for access to safe and effective vaccines for 92 low- and middle-income economies. Some of this funding, along with \$1.5 billion of other U.S. government funds, supports the purchase of 500 million doses of Pfizer vaccine that will be donated to

COVAX for distribution to low- and middle-income countries and economies as defined by AMC and the African Union. This is a historic action that is the largest-ever financial contribution and donation of vaccines by a single country. An estimated 200 million of these Pfizer doses will be delivered by the end of 2021 and the remaining 300 million will be delivered in the first half of 2022. In addition, President Biden's FY2022 budget request includes nearly \$1 billion for State Department and USAID global health security and pandemic response and preparedness activities.

9. In addition, the United States has also donated 110 million doses of safe and effective vaccines from the U.S. vaccine supply to more than 65 countries most in need around the world. The majority of these doses are being shared through COVAX, and we will continue to share from the U.S. supply as it becomes available. Our goals for sharing U.S. vaccines include maximizing the number of safe and effective vaccines available around the globe and for those most at-risk within countries, preparing for surges, prioritizing healthcare workers and other vulnerable populations based on public health data and acknowledged best practices, and helping countries in need, including our neighbours.

10. We are working with partners, pharmaceutical companies, and other manufacturers to expand local vaccine production investments globally. The Quad Vaccine Partnership between the United States, India, Japan, and Australia is committed to expanding local production of at least one billion safe and effective doses of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021 and 2022. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is working with G7 development finance institutions to support vaccine manufacturing in Africa – for Africa. To strengthen Africa's vaccine and pharmaceutical development and to accelerate the continent's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. DFC, along with international partners, announced on June 30 a financing package for Aspen, Africa's largest manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, to increase production capacity for COVID-19 vaccines, and on July 9 announced its commitment to support the Fondation Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD) to boost vaccine production in Senegal. The United States also supports a waiver of intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines under the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, and we will also facilitate, where appropriate, voluntary tech transfer on mutually agreed terms. Finally, the United States is expanding manufacturing for key vaccine supplies like lipids, specialized filters, tubing, and bioreactor bags. More of these materials produced in more places will mean fewer delays in getting to hospitals and care facilities.

## **V. Reengaging with the multilateral community to strengthen global health security**

11. While the United States works to support the global COVID-19 response, we are simultaneously working to strengthen the international health security architecture and increase capacities necessary to prevent, detect, and respond to biological threats. The United States reengaged with the WHO and will continue to be a full participant and a global leader to confront infectious disease threats and advance global health security, particularly through One Health multisectoral approaches. The United States is a co-chair for the WHO Member State Working Group on Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies that was established in 2021 to review panel recommendations on strengthening WHO and pandemic preparedness, including reforms to the International Health Regulations, and which will also assess the benefits of developing a WHO convention, agreement, or other international instrument on pandemic preparedness.

## VI. Conclusion

12. The United States is providing assistance and catalyzing, with partners, a comprehensive effort to end the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future biological threats. By increasing our investments, engaging multilaterally, and taking leadership roles in countering the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States is demonstrating our commitment to strengthening global health security and increasing national, regional, and global capacities necessary to combat biological threats, regardless of source. Furthermore, these actions – undertaken by U.S. private sector, government, funders, and philanthropists, with partners across the globe – underscore U.S. support for and full implementation of Article X of the BWC.

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