

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

We write to express our gratitude for your leadership, and that of Chairs Lowey, Waters, and Engel, in ensuring that provisions to support economic recovery and debt relief for the developing world—at zero cost to U.S. taxpayers—were attached in the House-passed H.R. 7617 appropriations package, and H.R. 8406, the updated Heroes Act. We applaud the comprehensiveness of the policies contained within the “Support for a Robust Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” sections of both pieces of legislation, which will greatly alleviate the spikes in poverty, hunger, and disease caused by the pandemic and economic crisis.

Thanks to your leadership, these House-passed provisions would support the issuance of at least 2 trillion Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to its member countries, which amounts to at least \$1.1 trillion of direct economic support to the developing world. SDRs, the IMF’s internal currency, would be distributed for free to low-income countries, which would then be available to be exchanged for hard currency such as U.S. dollars. This would help many countries avoid balance-of-payments crises, debt crises, and critical shortages of imports, such as food, medicine, and medical equipment. In countries already suffering from economic downturns, it would help them—and the world economy—recover more quickly. House Democrats’ support for this issuance is consistent with what the Fund’s leadership has itself proposed, and with the wishes of nearly all of the IMF’s 189 member countries.

In light of how vital these tools are for millions of the most vulnerable people—disproportionately communities of color across the world—we as chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Caucus ask that you incorporate these same provisions in any forthcoming legislation expected to be passed by the Senate and enacted into law by the end of the year.

We kindly request, for example, that these anti-poverty provisions also be included in a potential COVID-19 relief package currently under negotiation with the administration, an appropriations package for government funding, or in the conference report for the annual National Defense Authorization Act. As you know, Senate Armed Services Chairman Inhofe initially introduced the same House-passed language in support of the issuance of SDRs and debt relief within the third

manager's amendment to the Senate NDAA, indicating bipartisan support for these policies in a bicameral conference report.

The reason for the urgency in enacting this policy, as you are aware, is the UN World Food Program's projection that 265 million people in low- and middle-income countries will be facing acute hunger by the end of 2020—a near doubling from the year prior. More countries are experiencing economic recessions than ever recorded since 1870. There is no telling when the pandemic that is driving this unprecedented world recession will be over. These grim circumstances mean that millions of people could die, not only from COVID-19 itself, but from the pandemic's impact on the world economy—and most of these lives could be saved.

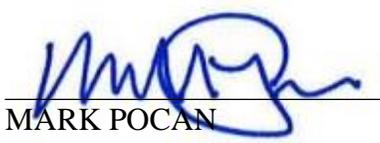
SDRs and debt relief will not only prevent needless poverty, hunger, death, and disease abroad, but strengthen our economy at home, creating jobs by increasing demand for America's agriculture industry and U.S. exporters. SDRs would allow private businesses in developing countries to quickly acquire U.S. dollars in order to buy U.S. exports. Given that U.S. exports fell by an astounding 64 percent annualized rate in the second quarter of this year, SDRs are a costless way to provide support to this vital sector of our economy. The Great Recession of 2008 cost an estimated 2 million jobs from the decline in exports, and today's pandemic-driven world recession is likely to be far, far worse. In short, economic relief and stimulus abroad will create many American jobs and advance our own economic recovery.

We once again thank you for your foresight and commitment to alleviating the acute crises in hunger, poverty and illness caused by this pandemic, and ask that the provisions contained in the "Support for a Robust Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic" of House-passed legislation be adopted in a December appropriations package for government funding. We greatly appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



MARK POCAN
Co-Chair
Congressional Progressive Caucus



JOAQUIN CASTRO
Chair
Hispanic Caucus



JUDY CHU
Chair
Asian Pacific American Caucus



KAREN BASS
Chair
Congressional Black Caucus

CC: Chairman Adam Smith, House Armed Services Committee

CC: Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee