

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 853

Calling on the United States and international donors to prioritize children, including the efforts of UNICEF, in COVID–19 rebuilding efforts.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2021

Ms. JACOBS of California (for herself and Mr. FITZPATRICK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States and international donors to prioritize children, including the efforts of UNICEF, in COVID–19 rebuilding efforts.

Whereas globally, children have carried the heaviest burdens of the COVID–19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis;

Whereas during the pandemic, approximately 80 million children under 18 were unable to access critical vaccines;

Whereas school closures due to the pandemic have affected 1.6 billion children, and at least one-third of children globally have been unable to access remote learning;

Whereas globally, there are 31 countries unprepared for remote learning, almost half of which kept their schools

closed for at least half of the COVID–19 pandemic, leaving 102 million students without any form of education;

Whereas 1.8 billion children have faced increased risk of forced labor, sexual exploitation, and abuse;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic has exacerbated physical and sexual violence against girls;

Whereas the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that the pandemic will push 142 million children into poverty, most of whom are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia;

Whereas COVID-related loss of income and the lack of job resources have increased the youths’ vulnerability to recruitment in armed groups or banditry gangs in countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia, and Nigeria;

Whereas an estimated 4.9 million children worldwide have lost a parent, custodial grandparent, or primary caregiver because of the pandemic;

Whereas the mental health of children living in conflict-affected regions is severely deteriorating as a direct result of the socioeconomic hardships of COVID–19;

Whereas the United States leads the world in sharing COVID–19 vaccines, committing to share over 1.1 billion doses with countries around the world, and has already shipped more than 225 million doses to over 100 countries;

Whereas lower income countries still struggle to receive needed COVID–19 vaccines and supplies like oxygen and syringes;

Whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that the pandemic could

increase the number of acutely food insecure people to 270 million;

Whereas the World Bank estimated that in 2020, an additional 19 to 30 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in conflict-affected countries;

Whereas government responses and economic impacts of COVID–19 are estimated to ignite conflict in 13 more countries by 2022;

Whereas African countries in particular have largely been left without access to COVID–19 vaccines, with less than 5 percent of the African population being fully vaccinated;

Whereas, for 75 years, UNICEF has worked tirelessly to support the rights and well-being of every child, in partnership with the United States, and has provided relief for children and adolescents in war-ravaged countries and for child health purposes generally, and to provide, without discrimination, assistance to vulnerable children around the world;

Whereas UNICEF has worked with partners such as Rotary International, Kiwanis International, the American Red Cross, and Lions Club International to decrease child mortality rates by more than half since 1990 and to provide critical health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education services and supplies for millions of children; and

Whereas UNICEF plays a key role in the United Nations global response to the COVID–19 crisis including by delivering vaccines, medicines, and other supplies around the world, particularly for vulnerable populations, providing personal protective equipment and facilitating

training on infection prevention and control for health workers: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on the United States to increase sup-
3 port for and work with international partners, in-
4 cluding the United Nations Children’s Fund
5 (UNICEF), Education Cannot Wait, and the Global
6 Partnership for Education, to address the education
7 and health needs of every child as the world recovers
8 and rebuilds from the global pandemic;

9 (2) urges the Department of State, the United
10 States Agency for International Development, and
11 other agencies to work with UNICEF and other
12 partners to reimagine basic education programs in
13 foreign assistance, to ensure access across childhood
14 from the earliest years through adolescence to early
15 childhood interventions, basic education services,
16 modern tools and learning platforms including on-
17 line, and youth skills-building programs that lead to
18 career opportunities;

19 (3) urges the United States Government to re-
20 inforce its diplomatic efforts with the international
21 community to increase global support for the pan-
22 demic response in low- and middle-income countries,
23 especially to promote greater vaccine equity across
24 sub-Saharan Africa; and

1 (4) urges the United States to support Giga, a
2 global initiative to connect every school to the inter-
3 net and every young person to educational resources
4 and opportunities.

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