The letter below, with over 65 organizational signatories, supports the Robust International Response to Pandemic Act (H.R.6581), introduced by Reps. García, Schakowsky, and Takano, and co-sponsored by Bass, Cicilline, Engel, Jayapal, Khanna, Lee, McGovern and others.

The signatories below urge Congress to include H.R.6581 in the new coronavirus response. This global public health crisis, and deepening world recession, together could kill millions of people, and have devastating ramifications for American workers. We urge House Democrats to ensure that the U.S. government allows a very large global financial assistance package from the International Monetary Fund. This would be entirely from the IMF and will not be financed in any way by U.S. taxpayers.

This bill would allow the IMF to issue Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), an emergency financial tool used as recently as 2009. The IMF issued SDRs in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis, helping ease the impact of the crisis on developing economies. We believe it's time to do this again -- swiftly and on a large scale.

H.R.6581 Key Endorsements (full list beneath letter below):

AFL-CIO
American Friends Service Committee
Amnesty International USA
Avaaz
Bread for the World
Church World Service
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Jubilee USA Network
League of Women Voters of the United States
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Oxfam America
Partners In Health
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Public Citizen
Save the Children US
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Dear Representative:

As COVID-19 triggers public health and economic crises in countries around the world, we, the undersigned organizations, urge you to co-sponsor the Robust International Response to Pandemic Act (H.R.6581), introduced by Representatives Jesus "Chuy" García, Jan Schakowsky, Mark Takano, and 13 other original co-sponsors. We believe Congress must enact H.R.6581 as part of forthcoming coronavirus legislation to ensure that developing countries will be supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial institutions with the resources they need to confront this unprecedented global crisis.

H.R.6581:

1. **Debt Relief**: Instructs U.S. representatives to the international financial institutions to support a suspension of debt payments to those institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic;

2. **Protection of Public Health Spending**: Instructs U.S. representatives to the international financial institutions to oppose programs that undermine countries’ ability to respond to COVID-19, such as those that encourage cuts to public health spending;

3. **Needed Resources**: Instructs the U.S. representative to the IMF to support issuing 3 trillion in “Special Drawing Rights.”

The United Nations World Food Program estimates that, as a result of the pandemic, 265 million people could face starvation by the end of the year. A report published by the United Nations University has found that half a billion people could be pushed into poverty. **Bold, concerted international action is urgently needed.**
One key measure that economists, development experts and humanitarian organizations from around the world are calling for is a major issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). A special international reserve asset created by the IMF, SDRs are distributed to central banks of countries in proportion to their IMF quotas. Countries can exchange SDRs for freely usable currencies when they are in weak financial positions. They are similar to the Federal Reserve’s swap arrangements, which have primarily benefited wealthy nations, whereas SDRs are distributed to all IMF member countries. Congress should support this costless and effective currency lifeline for the rest of the world.

The IMF last issued SDRs in 2009 in response to the global financial crisis and thereby helped ease the impact of the crisis on developing economies. Because SDRs are issued to each country roughly in proportion to the size of its economy, economists project that an issuance of three trillion SDRs will ensure that significant help can reach Latin America, sub-saharan Africa and other regions that face major economic and public health emergencies.

An issuance of SDRs for COVID-19 recovery has been endorsed by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, the Secretary General of the UN, most G20 countries, the New York Times and the Financial Times. Former World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz asserts that in order to help developing economies, “Full use must be made of the International Monetary Fund’s Special Drawing Rights.”

Another important measure to help developing countries during the pandemic is a moratorium on debt service payments to the IMF, World Bank and other international financial institutions. Low and middle income countries owe their creditors an estimated $2.7- $3.4 trillion in foreign currency debt service over the two years 2020-21.* Across 46 countries, debt payments for this year are currently projected to be 400% of their health budgets.

H.R. 6581 supports both a major issuance of SDRs and a moratorium on debt to international financial institutions, two vital measures that provide developing countries with critical financial support as they battle the pandemic.
We ask that you contact alex.campbell@mail.house.gov in Rep. García's office to cosponsor H.R.6581 and urge House Leadership to adopt this lifesaving and urgently needed proposal in the next coronavirus spending package.

Thank you for your consideration,

ActionAid USA
Action Corps
AFL-CIO
Alianza Americas (Illinois)
American Friends Service Committee
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain
Amnesty International USA
Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (USA)
Avaaz
Bread for the World
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for International Policy
Chicago Area Peace Action
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Church World Service
CODEPINK
Concerned Citizens for Change (New York)
Concerned Families of Westchester (New York)
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Demand Progress
Faiths for Safe Water
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Justice Clinic of NYU School of Law*
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Helping Hand for Survivors
Indivisible South Bay LA (California)
Jubilee USA Network
Just Foreign Policy
Justice Is Global
Knowdrones.com
Health Alliance International
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
League of Women Voters of the United States
MADRE
Massachusetts Peace Action
Mennonite Central Committee
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
New Jersey Peace Action
NYC-DSA Anti-War Working Group
Oxfam America
Partners In Health
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action Maine
Peace Action New York State
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Project Blueprint
Public Citizen
Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture (New York)
RootsAction.org
Save the Children US
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Justice Team
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvel, New York
STAND: the student-led movement to end mass atrocities
The Hunger Project
The Peace & Justice Program of All Souls NYC
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Washington Global Health Alliance
WESPAC Foundation (New York)
Win Without War
Women Against War
Women’s Refugee Care
WNY Peace Center (New York)
Yemeni Alliance Committee
Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation

*This communication does not purport to represent the institutional views, if any, of New York University.