

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H. RES. 245
OFFERED BY MS. BASS OF CALIFORNIA

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (commonly referred to as “COVID–19”) a pandemic on March 11, 2020;

Whereas the first COVID–19 case on the African continent was recorded on February 14, 2020, in Egypt, and as of March 2021, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has recorded approximately 4.1 million cases and more than 100,000 deaths;

Whereas, in early October 2020, a new COVID–19 variant was first detected in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, and as of February 1, 2021, the South Africa variant had spread rapidly around the globe, including to the United States;

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic demonstrates how interconnected United States domestic health and security is with the international community, underscores the importance of continued investments in global health security, and illustrates how the United States will not fully emerge from the pandemic until COVID–19 has been contained worldwide, including in Africa;

Whereas some leaders across Africa acted swiftly in response to the early spread of COVID–19 cases, repurposing ex-

isting health protocols and tools from previous epidemic outbreaks to fight COVID–19;

Whereas shortages of healthcare professionals in African countries have strained already fragile health care systems struggling to meet the unprecedented demands of the COVID–19 pandemic alongside other infectious disease outbreaks;

Whereas African countries have exhibited varying COVID–19 infection rates and limited testing capabilities across the continent have likely contributed to significant under-reporting of COVID–19 cases and fatalities;

Whereas, as of February 2021, South Africa had reported more than 1,460,000 COVID–19 cases (roughly 40 percent of the total African continent’s reported COVID–19 cases) and more than 49,000 COVID–19 related deaths (roughly 48 percent of the African continent’s reported COVID–19 deaths);

Whereas across the African continent, COVID–19 has compounded existing education challenges, as schools have closed while limited access to electricity and technological gaps have hindered distance learning;

Whereas some African governments have used COVID-19 response measures to delay elections, crack down on civil society, and violently enforce lockdown orders;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization (WHO), women and girls in Africa are likely to be the hardest hit by health, social, and economic consequences of COVID–19;

Whereas WHO and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund have warned of an alarming decline in the number of children receiving lifesaving vac-

cines in Africa and elsewhere around the world, and social distancing and lockdowns to control the spread of COVID–19 have disrupted vaccination campaigns, as well as prevention and treatment programs, including those to treat and prevent HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria;

Whereas aid disruptions, lockdowns and border closures, and rising food prices linked to the COVID–19 crisis are increasing the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees and internally displaced people across Africa, leading to even greater food insecurity for millions;

Whereas the World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, food insecurity rose by 1,000,000 to 4,800,000 since the start of the COVID–19 pandemic, and ongoing conflicts, mass displacement, droughts, and locust infestations have further contributed to severe food insecurity in parts of Africa;

Whereas Africa’s youth are playing a crucial role to help their communities by fighting misinformation and leading campaigns to fight COVID–19; for example, in Nigeria, a young man disseminated accurate information about the pandemic in more than 60 local languages, and in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, youth activists went door-to-door distributing informational pamphlets on how to stop the spread of COVID–19;

Whereas many migrants and their families rely on remittances as a source of income, and the Brookings Institution reports that remittance to sub-Saharan Africa will decline by 5.8 percent to \$41,000,000,000 in 2021 compared to \$44,000,000,000 in 2020 and \$48,000,000,000 in 2019;

Whereas as of March 2021, the United States has provided \$1.6 billion and appropriated an additional \$10 billion to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID–19 globally, including \$410 million in Africa, and pledged \$4 billion to COVID–19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), the global COVID–19 vaccine facility;

Whereas COVID–19 response funding builds on more than \$59 billion of United States investment in global health and global health systems strengthening on the continent over the last two decades, securing United States leadership in global health and as the largest global health donor in Africa by far; and

Whereas there is a need for strong United States engagement with African countries, in coordination with partners and allies, to mitigate future economic, security, and humanitarian impacts stemming from the COVID–19 pandemic: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

1 That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms that decreasing the spread of
3 COVID–19 and preventing future COVID–19
4 variants, globally and in Africa, is in the national in-
5 terest of the United States;

6 (2) commends the heroic work of Africa’s front-
7 line health workers to keep the continent and the
8 world safe;

1 (3) urges the Group of Twenty (G–20) mem-
2 bers, including the United States Government, to—

3 (A) increase contributions to concessional
4 lending facilities managed by the International
5 Monetary Fund to support implementation of
6 COVID–19 containment measures and provide
7 liquidity to African countries over the next 2
8 years;

9 (B) amend national remittance plans to
10 promote financial inclusion amid the COVID-19
11 pandemic, and ensure remittance costs do not
12 exceed the 3 percent called for in the United
13 Nations Sustainable Development Goals; and

14 (C) continue to support efforts, such as the
15 G–20’s Debt Service Standstill Initiative to fi-
16 nance debt standstill for African countries, to
17 be followed by fair, transparent, and com-
18 prehensive debt restructuring to free up re-
19 sources to respond to the pandemic and its fall-
20 out; and

21 (4) encourages the United States, other donor
22 governments, African governments, the United Na-
23 tions, nongovernmental organizations, and other
24 stakeholders to—

1 (A) continue support for efforts to dis-
2 tribute personal protective equipment, thera-
3 peutics and vaccines to combat COVID–19, in-
4 cluding continued support for the GAVI Alli-
5 ance, the Access to COVID–19 Tools ACT-Ac-
6 celerator, and the COVAX facility and other
7 multilateral funding institutions to prevent
8 backsliding in efforts to combat other infectious
9 diseases;

10 (B) prioritize COVID–19 impacts on the
11 most vulnerable, including women and girls,
12 displaced populations, and the elderly, and
13 frontline health workers;

14 (C) prioritize efforts to address the sec-
15 ondary and tertiary impacts of the COVID–19
16 pandemic, including on livelihoods, food secu-
17 rity, education systems, global supply chains,
18 access to secure internet and digital
19 connectivity, and governance and election prep-
20 arations;

21 (D) particularly in conflict-affected areas
22 and fragile states, align humanitarian,
23 peacebuilding, and development efforts to miti-
24 gate COVID–19 impacts and prevent further

1 destabilization as a result of the COVID–19
2 pandemic;

3 (E) maintain or increase support to coordi-
4 nate with, as appropriate, African governments’
5 and Ministry of Health COVID–19 response
6 plans, including their country-specific actionable
7 national deployment and vaccination plans, and
8 efforts by the Africa CDC and the African
9 Union; and

10 (F) meaningfully engage local organiza-
11 tions and build local capacity, implement inclu-
12 sive and transparent development planning,
13 consider host country buy in and commitment
14 before allocating resources, and adopt flexible,
15 country-specific approaches to fight COVID–19
16 by recognizing the unique needs and challenges
17 of each country context.

Amend the title so as to read: “Calling for continued
and robust international collaboration and coordination to
fight COVID–19 across Africa.”.

