
GLOBAL PANDEMIC UPDATE: NEW WHITE HOUSE STRATEGY PRIORITIZES INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL HEALTH RESPONSE

January 2021

The Biden Administration rolled out its [National Strategy for COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#) the day after Inauguration, saying **it would treat epidemic and pandemic preparedness, health security, and global health “as top national security priorities**, and will work with other nations to combat COVID-19 and seek to create a world that is safe and secure from biological threats.”

One of the seven goals in the strategy is to **“Restore U.S. leadership globally, advance health security, and build better preparedness for future threats.”** This blueprint arrives on the heels of a broader economic stimulus proposal to support America’s recovery from the global pandemic, which included an \$11 billion investment in international response efforts.

The following summary breaks down the four key parts of the Administration’s plan for shoring up global health systems and resources to eliminate the spread of the virus and prevent future pandemic threats.

- **PART 1: “Restore the U.S. relationship with the World Health Organization and seek to strengthen and reform it.”**

On his first day in office, President Biden signed an executive order to stop the U.S. withdrawal from World Health Organization and sent letters to the United Nations and the WHO on the U.S. intent to rejoin the organization. In announcing the Executive Order, the White House also said it would work with global partners to “strengthen and reform the organization.”

The following morning, at the direction of the Administration, Dr. Anthony Fauci participated in a WHO Board of Directors meeting, where he asserted the U.S. “stands ready to work in partnership and solidarity to support the international COVID-19 response.”

- **PART 2: “Surge the international COVID-19 public health & humanitarian response.”**

The Administration aims to shore up the frontline responses to the global pandemic by supporting Access to COVID-19 Tools (known as the ACT Accelerator) and joining the multilateral vaccine effort, COVAX, which is working to promote equitable global distribution of a vaccine. Tony Blinken, President Biden’s nominee for Secretary of State, also spoke to the Administration’s intent to join COVAX during his Senate confirmation hearing to, “make sure that others around the world who want access to (the vaccine) have it.”

This commitment comes in the aftermath of \$4 billion in emergency COVID-19 response funds for Gavi, the vaccine alliance, passed by Congress at the end of last year – an important foundation for global vaccine distribution efforts from which to build this year. Global vaccine distribution is critical to a global recovery, and the director general of the World Health Organization recently warned that “low and most middle-income countries are not yet receiving the vaccine.”

- **PART 3: “Restore U.S. leadership to the international COVID-19 response and advance global health security and diplomacy.”**

In addition to prioritizing resources for the immediate COVID-19 response, the administration’s plan includes resources for global health security, improving the coordination of public health crises’ response and early warning systems, and strengthening global pandemic supply chains.

The U.S. is currently the world’s largest provider of global health assistance, investing more than \$140 billion over the last two decades and making immense progress in the global health security field. And our country’s leadership on global health security has paid dividends – the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), signed into law by President George W. Bush, has saved 20 million lives since 2003.

■ **PART 4: “Build better bio-preparedness and expand resilience for biological threats.”**

The White House will restore the National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense, and the Administration plans to establish a National Center for Epidemic Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics to better detect and respond to biological threats. The Administration also intends to review and strengthen other aspects of U.S. biopreparedness and capacity including supply chains, workforce, and investments in technology.

President Biden has appointed Elizabeth Cameron to lead the restored NSC Senior Directorate, a position she held under the Obama Administration. In discussing the Ebola outbreak, she spoke to the importance of U.S. leadership, noting that “As a result of U.S. leadership, we made a historic, \$1 billion investment to advance the Global Health Security Agenda, which spurred the G-7 Leaders to make a collective commitment to assist 76 countries and regions. Focusing on a longer-term issue in the middle of an immediate crisis is always challenging, but it’s vital in order to get out in front and prevent future tragedy.”

The USGLC will be tracking additional developments in the White House and Congress as the U.S. international response to the global pandemic takes shape. In the meantime, be sure to check out our [COVID-19 Resource Hub](#) to learn more about the profound impacts the virus has had on the global economy, ongoing humanitarian crises, global health infrastructure, the refugees, and more.
