



## Advocacy Agenda

The 117th Congress has an opportunity to bolster the United States' standing in the world as a global leader in humanitarian assistance and international development. With record numbers of people displaced from their homes and in need of aid, heightened climate crises and food insecurity, worsening gender inequality, and now a global economic downturn, all occurring amid a historic global pandemic, the actions taken and policies developed in 2021 will be decisive.

Restored U.S. leadership and significant resources are needed to address the severe threats to communities' health and welfare around the world. Current resources are insufficient to meet our current challenges. As we face lost lives and livelihoods, intersecting and compounding injustices, and weakened investments in U.S. development and diplomacy, Congress has an urgent duty to ensure that gains made in international development and humanitarian relief are not lost.

### STRENGTHENING AND ELEVATING U.S. LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: FIVE KEY AREAS FOR ACTION

CARE has developed detailed recommendations in five key areas:

#### 1. Restoring U.S. Leadership in Development and Diplomacy

- With the challenges currently facing the world, key personnel and leadership must be in place as quickly as possible. The Administration and Congress should prioritize the nomination and confirmation of the USAID Administrator and US Ambassador to the United Nations along with those for the Secretaries of State and Defense and no later than the nominations for the Deputy Secretaries of State.
- The 117th Congress should support a reinvigorated International Affairs Budget of no less than **\$60 billion**, in addition to a robust global COVID-19 response of no less than **\$20 billion**.
- Additionally, the U.S. should reverse its withdrawal from the U.N. Human Rights Council and re-engage constructively with the Commission on the Status of Women and for a dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the U.S. must ensure that the Paris Climate Agreement is a floor, not a ceiling, and immediately rejoin and work to strengthen the World Health Organization.

## 2. Gender Equality, Women and Girls Issues

- Congress should fully fund programs that address gender-based violence (GBV) and support women's sexual and reproductive health, which are both critical to a foreign policy that recognizes women's and girls' rights. This funding should support and advance efforts to fully update, implement and institutionalize existing interagency strategies to prevent and respond to GBV globally, improve women's economic empowerment, and empower adolescent girls.
- Congress should swiftly pass the *Keeping Women and Girls Safe from the Start Act*, bipartisan legislation that recognizes the urgent issue of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and provides U.S. agencies with the tools to address this critical gap in humanitarian protection.
- Recognizing the critical impact COVID-19 has had on women and girls, Congress should urgently provide additional funding and resources to address these impacts, particularly the dramatically heightened levels of gender-based violence and the serious ramifications of the crisis on women's economic status.

## 3. Global Humanitarian Assistance

- The U.S. must restore American credibility and leadership in the effort to address global forced displacement by expanding domestic refugee resettlement **to a minimum of 125,000 annually**. Additionally, the U.S. must provide financial support to refugees' host countries and countries of origin, engage diplomatically to resolve the root causes of displacement, and reduce barriers to services and aid for displaced communities.
- Congress must ensure civilian protection is a first-order priority in the United States' conduct of hostilities, **security relationships and broader diplomacy**. This will be achieved by increasing civilian casualty reporting transparency, ensuring the necessary agency staffing to enhance civilian harm mitigation in U.S. operations, and promoting accountability and compliance with laws of armed conflict and human rights. **International humanitarian law compliance must be required as a condition for arms sales.**
- Safeguarding access and reducing barriers to principled humanitarian response is an urgent prerequisite to meet the growing global needs. Congress can take actionable

steps to **ensure humanitarian considerations are paramount in counter-terror policy implementation and to safeguard humanitarian action** in areas where designated actors are present through broad licensing and waivers and reduced financial de-risking.

## 4. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

- True gains for women's equality cannot be achieved without a solid commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights. We urge Congress to make long-term investments in lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services. Commitment means going beyond merely rescinding the Mexico City Policy but also restoring funding to important multilateral organizations such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and legislating permanent statutory protection for comprehensive international family planning services.
- Congress should appropriate requests no less than \$1.66 billion for bilateral family planning services and \$111 million for UNFPA.
- The U.S. must also recognize the dire need for reproductive health services in crisis settings and fully integrate SRHR services at the outset of emergency response, as has been the policy of both the Obama and Trump administrations.

## 5. Global Nutrition and Food Security/Climate Change

- Congress should ensure robust funding levels for food assistance budget accounts, including Food for Peace, Feed the Future, the McGovern-Dole school feeding program, and the nutrition subaccount. Additionally, Congress must expand long-term food security programs, which are even more urgent in the face of COVID-19 and its ripple effects on hunger and malnutrition.
- Congress should reauthorize the Global Food Security Act (GFSA) by 2023 and ensure that the updated legislation includes strong support for women smallholder farmers, gender targets, and placing women at the center of efforts to address global hunger and malnutrition.