

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power:

Thank you for your leadership in this precarious time. We write to you regarding U.S. global assistance to help curb the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects in Cabo Verde.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the U.S. government has announced more than \$1.5 billion in emergency health, humanitarian, economic and development assistance to help countries across the world. In September, the U.S. government provided slightly over \$1.5 million to Cabo Verde to mitigate the economic impacts of the pandemic, primarily through the Feed the Future West Africa Trade Hub Contract. However, according to the Cabo Verdean American community, need for assistance in Cabo Verde continues and more aid is required for the country to recover.

Cabo Verde is a lower-middle income island off the coast of West Africa with a population of 540,000. While the country had relatively few COVID-19 cases at the start of the pandemic, in April of this year, cases spiked. Further, like several other African nations, Cabo Verde has faced difficulty kickstarting robust vaccination campaigns and currently has only vaccinated 0.2% of its population. By contrast, at least 45% of the U.S. population has received at least one dose of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration-authorized COVID-19 vaccines.

In March, Cabo Verde received its first batch of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccines from COVAX. While COVAX is necessary to start addressing the imbalances in access to COVID vaccines between rich and poor countries, it does not have the capacity to provide for enough of the Cabo Verde's population to reach herd immunity. In fact, it plans to vaccinate over only 20% of the country's population. Further, with the devastating COVID emergency ongoing in India, the expected global shipment of vaccines from India will need to be diverted to their domestic control efforts, leaving the gap in foreign aid for Cabo Verde larger than anticipated.

We therefore respectfully request that when determining your foreign aid allocations and COVID-related assistance, Cabo Verde, a vulnerable nation isolated from mainland Africa, receives the support it needs to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



HAKEEM JEFFRIES
Member of Congress



ANTONIO DELGADO
Member of Congress