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Opinion | PEPFAR, Global Fund Should Be Fully Funded, Especially During Global Economic Crisis, Opinion Piece Says [Mar 09, 2009]

"As the post-mortem is done on the Bush presidency, there is one remarkably bright spot in the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world -- the program known as the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#)," Joia Mukherjee, medical director for [Partners in Health](#), writes in a [Boston Globe](#) opinion piece. She adds that the U.S. has "led the way for rich countries in the world to bring major resources to bear against the AIDS pandemic, both through the creation of PEPFAR and as the major contributor to" the [Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria](#).

Despite the current global economic crisis, "[n]ow is the time to fully fund" the "renewed and expanded" version of PEPFAR [signed](#) into law in 2008, Mukherjee writes, adding, "In 2010, \$9 billion is needed to enact all the reforms and expansion promised in PEPFAR's reauthorization" and the pledges made during President Obama and Vice President Biden's campaigns. "Additional funding is also needed for the Global Fund, which faces a shortfall of \$5 billion through 2010," according to Mukherjee. She adds, "In order to meet our fair share and to provide significant leverage for other donor countries to fill the remaining gap, the United States should provide an additional \$1 billion in supplemental funding this year and a commitment of \$2.7 billion for 2010."

Mukherjee writes, "In this time of global economic crisis, it becomes even more imperative that we keep our promises to the world's poor, who are even more affected by this crisis than those in the developed world." She adds, "Funding the expanded commitment to PEPFAR and the Global Fund is critical to fight the three diseases that collectively kill six million people each year and cost African nations an estimated \$12 billion a year in lost productivity." According to Mukherjee, if "this economic crisis has taught us anything, it's that the fate of one economy can affect all of us. By investing in health in poor countries, the United States helps to stabilize and grow the world economy." She concludes, "Congress and Obama made a promise to expand the U.S. commitment by reauthorizing PEPFAR in 2008. Fulfilling this significant commitment to the health and development of the world will go a long way toward promoting economic stability and good will for the United States" (Mukherjee, *Boston Globe*, 3/9).

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