

**From:** Hope Ferdowsian [REDACTED]  
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To FIF's Founding Donors, the World Bank, WHO, and Other Key Stakeholders,

Thank you for your attention to the importance of pandemic prevention and preparedness, as outlined in your recent [White Paper](#).

As other members of the medical and public health community and I recently wrote to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization, and Members of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body, pandemic prevention and preparedness must focus on equity and primary prevention, including a just One Health approach as defined by the One Health High-Level Expert Panel.

Our letter in support of efforts to advance an international instrument on pandemic prevention and preparedness, with a growing list of signatories, can be found [online](#).

As we noted in the letter, between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021, COVID-19 claimed almost six million human lives worldwide. During the same period, there were almost 300 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 222 countries and territories. Excess mortality due to the COVID-19 pandemic has exceeded 18 million.

People of color, who are members of the global majority, have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and more than five million children have lost a parent or other primary caregiver. COVID-19 mitigation measures resulted in the largest disruption in schooling in history, and hard-won fights for women, children, and individuals living in poverty have begun to reverse during the pandemic. The pandemic has deepened social and economic disparities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained the healthcare system. Moreover, nearly half of all patients who are hospitalized with COVID-19 develop complications, suggesting that long-term problems from COVID-19 could strain healthcare systems for years. Healthcare workers are leaving their chosen fields, resulting in serious workforce shortages.

Overall, the economic costs of the pandemic could total an estimated US\$16 trillion.

The world cannot afford another pandemic on this scale. Primary prevention must be a vital part of any FIF plans related to pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

Although the origin of SARS-CoV-2, the pathogen that causes COVID-19, is still under investigation, a growing body of evidence confirms that ecosystem degradation, habitat loss and fragmentation, biodiversity loss, encroachment into wildlife habitats, the commercial trade in wild animals, and intensive animal farming increase the risk of emerging infectious disease outbreaks and exacerbate other negative impacts on human and animal health. Approximately 75% of emerging infectious diseases in humans originate in animals. To prevent future pandemics, we must change the way we interact with animals and their habitats.

The FIF could be well-positioned to support just transitions to agricultural, research, and trade practices that do not exploit humans, animals, or the environment. The FIF could take the lead on investment and divestment strategies that reduce the risk for future pandemics through a just One Health approach. Any governing board should be truly independent and free of industry influence or other conflicts of interest. Such approaches would align with the World Bank's stated commitments to environmental sustainability, anti-corruption, and transparency.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,

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