

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Wally Adeyemo  
Deputy Secretary of the Treasury  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Deputy Secretary Adeyemo,

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is rapidly deteriorating, with nine million people just one step away from famine. But it is the country's economic crisis that is threatening to collapse Afghanistan into a failed state, and at the upcoming Board of Governor's meeting at the World Bank, the United States has an opportunity to lead the push for urgent action by the Bank to address the crisis in Afghanistan. We urge you to demonstrate the leadership Afghans and the world need right now.

First, today there are at least 400,000 civil servants in Afghanistan that are critical to continued delivery of basic human services like healthcare and education. But many of them are not being paid. In December, the World Bank released \$100 million from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) to pay the salaries of healthcare workers – it is time to expand on that model. Earlier this month, the Treasury Department explicitly authorized non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan to make “salary support payments directly to healthcare workers and teachers.” UNICEF has just announced that it will use EU funding to pay a monthly stipend to nearly 200,000 primary and secondary school teachers for January and February. The United States should now take the next step, and encourage our colleagues on the board of the World Bank to urgently repurpose the \$1.2 billion remaining in the ARTF for salary payments of healthcare workers and teachers.

Second, Afghanistan is now suffering from a liquidity crisis, triggered by the lack of both U.S. dollars needed to pay for imports of food, fuel, and fertilizers, as well as afghanis needed to pay for goods in the market and local salaries. To help solve this problem, the UN has proposed a Humanitarian Exchange Facility (HEF). The HEF would serve as a safe clearinghouse to facilitate the exchange of afghanis and dollars for humanitarian operations, effectively enabling an effective humanitarian response and injecting some much needed liquidity into the economy – all while bypassing the Taliban and ensuring the money goes straight to the Afghan people. The United States should back this initiative by supporting technical assistance and robust funding from the World Bank needed to get the HEF up and running.

These steps alone will not solve Afghanistan's economic crisis. Navigating U.S. and international sanctions on the Taliban, resolving the issue of Afghanistan's assets held at the U.S. Federal Reserve, and restoring a functioning economy in the country will take months if not years. But the United States has an opportunity to start reversing Afghanistan's economic

collapse, beginning with bold leadership at the next Board of Governor's meeting at the World Bank on March 1<sup>st</sup>. We urge you to support these steps.

Sincerely,



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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

cc. Jose Fernandez, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, U.S. Department of State