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THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided more than \$27.7¹ million to help Pacific Islands respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This assistance affirms the United States' strong, longstanding commitment to supporting the Pacific Islands countries in their development journey.

USAID support, which spans across the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu improves the health, social, economic, and environmental conditions of the Pacific's diverse communities. To date, total U.S. government support to the Pacific Islands for COVID-19 response stands over \$118 million, including over \$90 million funding support to the U.S. Freely Associated States (Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau) from the Department of the Interior, Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Education, and Department of Labor. Over the past 20 years, the United States has invested over \$5.21 billion in assistance to the Pacific Islands.

¹ This amount includes \$24.2 million for Pacific Regional and \$3.5 specifically for Papua New Guinea.

For more than a half century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security and humanitarian assistance. Over the past decade, the United States has invested more than \$620 million for health for the Pacific Islands. USAID is working with the State Department, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Defense, and others as part of an All-of-America response to support health systems, humanitarian assistance, and economic, security, and stabilization efforts worldwide.

For decades, the United States has been the world's largest provider of bilateral assistance in global health — putting countries across the world in a better position to respond to this dangerous pathogen. Across the world, the U.S. Government is responding to the COVID-19 outbreak by supporting more than 120 affected countries through addressing critical needs of health care facilities, health care workers, and patients; strengthening laboratories and disease surveillance; improving infection prevention and control; increasing rapid-response capacity; and providing reliable information to the public.

OUR WORK

USAID assistance in the Pacific is supporting partner countries in the region to prevent the spread and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. USAID programs enable risk-communications, hygiene promotion and handwashing, the prevention and control of infectious diseases in health facilities, and logistics support to move essential medical supplies and personnel. U.S. assistance is enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to combat disinformation and protect the rights of vulnerable and marginalized populations. U.S. government support is also boosting partner countries' resilience and their ability to respond to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19. Health-related assistance is strengthening laboratory systems, activating case-finding and event-based surveillance, and supporting technical experts for COVID-19 response and preparedness.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At the national and regional levels, USAID strengthens the capacity of governments and regional institutions to develop and implement effective environmental and disaster mitigation policies and strategies.

USAID, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is facilitating the development and the production of communication campaigns. The partnership is also providing technical assistance to monitor and manage points of entry; supporting the procurement, storage, and distribution of critical supplies, including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) supplies, cleaners and disinfectants; and by offering technical assistance, equipment, and operational support to package and transfer laboratory samples. These measures strengthen health system preparedness in the face of COVID-19, rebuilding the communities' trust and strengthening supply chain management, health policies and regulations. In addition, USAID is working with The Pacific Community in the North Pacific to ensure that COVID-19 food security programs are reinforced by the principles of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, participation, and equality, and are implemented to provide greater benefits to those who need them most, including people who are marginalized or excluded.

The Pacific American Fund is USAID's primary project to respond to second-order impacts of COVID in the region. The project will support COVID-19 recovery by assisting the region's most vulnerable

communities and preventing development backsliding. The Pacific American Fund will support COVID-19 recovery by assisting civil society organizations through sub-grants which address the communities' most pressing development priorities. USAID will finance COVID recovery in a multi-sectoral approach while also building the capacity of recipients to promote the sustainability of organizations. USAID grants aim to improve the quality of life in the Pacific Islands by increasing climate change and disaster resilience, facilitating sustainable market-driven economic growth, extending access to quality health care and education, and advancing democratic governance.

HEALTH

USAID, in partnership with The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), is bolstering community-level risk communication and infection prevention, building community engagement, providing WASH products, and assisting with data collection. In addition, USAID is supporting the efforts of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in partnership with the Pacific National Red Cross Societies, to provide technical assistance for preparedness planning, risk communications and community engagement campaigns. In addition, IFRC is providing health and hygiene promotion, case detection and surveillance, and infection prevention and control. Additionally, USAID in partnership with international organizations is supporting laboratory strengthening and preparedness, procuring laboratory supplies, training health workers, and bolstering surveillance activities. USAID is also building the capacity of health workers on infection prevention and control measures, supporting laboratory activities, and upgrading hand washing facilities in clinics. USAID is delivering state-of-the-art, life-saving ventilators and other needed equipment, as well as building the capacity of the frontline health workers to provide critical care to patients whose conditions are life threatening. Such initiatives help the communities of the Pacific better prevent, detect, and respond to emerging health threats. These programs enable partners to use data and information to monitor and evaluate the health needs of their citizens and deploy resources quickly and adequately.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

USAID promotes government accountability and transparency by encouraging citizen engagement and the implementation of effective policies. Through USAID's Strengthening Democratic Governance in the Pacific Islands project, the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS) is working throughout the region to address disinformation and address human rights violations as related to the pandemic and ensure that marginalized groups receive critical information and resources about COVID-19. CEPPS also works with government agencies and CSOs to provide capacity building on supporting civil society and securing upcoming elections. USAID assistance is enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to combat disinformation and protect the rights of vulnerable and marginalized populations. These efforts are also improving partner countries' resilience and their ability to respond to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Working with the national and local governments along donor partners, USAID's humanitarian assistance program supports partners to help combat COVID-19 in the most vulnerable communities throughout the Pacific region. USAID humanitarian partners are on the ground in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands,

Micronesia, Samoa, Palau, Vanuatu, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu to help prevent and respond to the virus. Local partners are supporting emergency and health authorities' prevention and response operations, pre-positioning medical and relief supplies, distributing hygiene supplies, and installing handwashing stations and water tanks at strategic points. USAID-funded programs are raising awareness about COVID-19 along with maintaining proper health, and providing materials in alternative format to ensure that the information can be accessible to all, including the blind and the deaf communities. USAID partners are also providing psychological and social services to protect vulnerable populations at increased risk of gender-based violence due to the pandemic. In addition, USAID is supporting the UN World Food Program's region-wide logistics operation to airlift critical medical supplies and enhance telecommunications infrastructure throughout this vast region of island nations.

For more information about how USAID is responding to COVID-19 across the world, please visit www.usaid.gov/coronavirus.

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