

Haiti: New grant to help UNICEF strengthen efforts to tackle cholera

22 February 2017 – A new grant from the Government of Japan will allow the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to help reduce cholera-related morbidity and mortality in Haiti in 2017 and 2018, the UN agency said in a news release.

“With this gift from the Japanese people, we will strengthen the axes of the fight against cholera in the protection of the Haitian population, especially children,” said Marc Vincent, UNICEF Representative in Haiti, welcoming the contribution.

“Japan is a key partner and we thank the Japanese people for their continued support,” he added.

Haiti has been dealing with a cholera outbreak since October 2010, some nine months after it suffered a devastating earthquake. The outbreak has affected an estimated 788,000 people and claimed the lives of more than 9,000. Concerted national and international efforts, backed by the United Nations, have resulted in a 90 per cent reduction in the number of suspected cases.

The \$2.6 million grant (nearly 300 million Japanese yen) will help strengthen the island nation’s epidemiological coordination and surveillance; and support conducting timely surveys, rapid response teams and case management, as well as improving and increasing awareness of cholera-related hygiene.

According to UNICEF, the cholera epidemic in Haiti continues to be the largest in the western hemisphere. More than 41,000 suspected cases of cholera have been reported throughout Haiti in 2016.

With the new funds, interventions will be implemented across the island nation with an emphasis on the cholera-prone departments of Center, North, West, Grand’Anse, Sud (South), and Artibonite.

Two of these departments – Grand’Anse and Sud – were where Hurricane Matthew made landfall in early October, inflicting much devastation as it cut a path of destruction through country.

In the news release, the Ambassador of Japan to Haiti, Yoshiaki Hatta, said that the grant had been decided upon a resurgence in suspected cholera cases resulting from the deterioration of the sanitary and hygiene situation caused by rainy seasons or natural disasters.

Japan considers that this issue should be addressed in collaboration with the Government of Haiti and the international community, the Ambassador added, expressing appreciation for UNICEF, and calling on all stakeholders to strengthen their collaboration in the fight against cholera.

Meanwhile, a Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for the UN Haiti Cholera

Response has been set up to enable Member States, other partners and individuals (including UN staff) to contribute. To date, it has received funds from five Member States: Chile (\$250,000); France (\$638,000); India (\$100,000); Republic of Korea (\$1 million); and Liechtenstein (\$50,000).

As for other resources provided outside of the Trust Fund, Canada has made a \$4,600,000 parallel contribution in support of the UN Haiti Cholera Response – with some of the funds going to UNICEF & PAHO.