

UK announces funding to boost COVID-19 preparedness in Pacific

United Kingdom Minister for the Pacific, Lord Zac Goldsmith, has announced £1.8m funding (US\$2.3million) under the Pacific Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, to strengthen COVID-19 health sector preparedness and response in the Pacific, including Papua New Guinea, through the World Health Organization.

Lord Goldsmith made the announcement at the start of his virtual visit to the region.

This vital funding will provide critical assistance and build on the good work already underway to strengthen COVID-19 preparedness and response across ten Pacific Island countries including Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

British Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Paul Welsh, said:

The UK is committed to supporting the Pacific Island nations at this difficult time. This important programme provides critical support to aid Covid-19 response and provide wider social and economic benefits across the region.

The funding is in support of the COVID-19 Pacific Health Sector Plan and the Papua New Guinea Covid-19 Response Plan coordinated by WHO with other multilateral agencies.

Under these Plans, healthcare providers across the Pacific will receive ventilators, patient monitoring systems and other essential equipment and training.

This will boost tertiary healthcare facilities in the region especially in the care and treatment of COVID-19 patients and support national preparedness for the gradual easing of regional travel restrictions.