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PRESS RELEASE

New COVID-19 test kits and equipment to boost Samoa's response to global pandemic

APIA, 19 June 2020 – COVID-19 test kits and a machine to test for the virus, arrived today into Samoa and were handed over to the Scientific Research Organization of Samoa (SROS) to support the Government of Samoa in its response to the global pandemic.

This equipment, which will be used for COVID-19 testing purposes, were procured by UNDP, in collaboration with UNICEF, to support the Government of Samoa in addressing gaps in COVID-19 testing capacities.

The equipment, valued at USD 293,000 (795,451 Tala), will provide a significant boost to facilitating in-country testing for COVID-19 and have the capacity to test as many people who may need to.

As the scientific research arm of the Government, SROS is the recipient of these supplies which include 2,000 test kits and the Real Time-quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-qPCR) equipment which has the ability to test for COVID-19 and other invasive pathogens.

“This is a significant acquisition for the Government of Samoa because we did not have the capacity to test for COVID-19 before. This equipment will continue to help the Government keep Samoa COVID-free,” said the Minister of SROS, Lopao Natanielu Mu’a.

The arrival of the COVID-19 testing equipment will provide much needed support given the challenges of supplies entering the country with reduced frequency of flights into Samoa.

“The United Nations Development Programme is pleased to have been part of this support to the Government of Samoa. The Scientific Research Organization of Samoa and its forthcoming testing will be critical in the Government’s plan to proceed with repatriating Samoan citizens,” said UNDP Resident Representative, Jorn Sorensen.

“Access to proper testing is critical to keeping children and their families safe during this global pandemic,” said UNICEF Pacific Representative, Sheldon Yett. “UNICEF is pleased to support efforts by the Government of Samoa to increase the country’s testing capacity.”

The equipment will increase Samoa’s testing capability thereby directly enabling the Government to safely repatriate Samoans stranded abroad.

This is part of UNDP and UNICEF health system support to the Government of Samoa, which also includes COVID-related assistance in other areas, including child protection,

psychosocial support to families and children, and communicating with communities on how to prevent COVID-19.

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