

## UNITED NATIONS RELEASES NEW FUNDING TO FIGHT SAMOA MEASLES OUTBREAK

*New York, 09 December 2019* - The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock has released US\$2.6 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to help fight the devastating measles outbreak in Samoa and support the wider region.

The funds will provide emergency vaccinations, obstetric and neonatal care for mothers and newborns infected with measles, mental health and psychosocial support, clean water and sanitation, and lifesaving public health information for 1.25 million people.

On 15 November, the Government of Samoa declared a state of emergency in response to the growing measles outbreak. As of 8 December, nearly 4,700 cases and 70 fatalities have been reported, overwhelming the health system in a country with a population of about 200,000. Around 200 new cases are reported daily and most of these are children under 5.

UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said:

“The Pacific island nation of Samoa is in the midst of a desperate race to vaccinate its population against measles and treat those who have already been affected. Its youngest citizens are most at risk, along with pregnant women and new mothers.

“The people of Samoa will not fight this outbreak alone. The United Nations has today released \$2.6 million of funding that will help 1.25 million people, including with urgent vaccination and treatment. We can and must move swiftly to stop this deadly outbreak in its tracks.”

The Government of Samoa, with support from the UN and the international community, launched a mass vaccination campaign on 20 November. This has so far reached about 90 per cent of the 143,000 people it targeted.

On 6 December the Government of Samoa launched a National Measles Response and Recovery Appeal, seeking \$10.7 million to support national efforts to contain the outbreak.

A global resurgence of measles cases has affected all regions of the world since 2007, including the Pacific. By the end of November 2019, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and American Samoa reported measles outbreaks. Prior to the ongoing outbreaks, measles vaccine coverage varied in Pacific island countries and areas, ranging from 31% in Samoa to 99% in the Cook Islands, Nauru and Niue.

Established by the UN General Assembly in 2005 as a global fund ‘for all, by all’ the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) enables timely, effective and life-saving humanitarian action supporting UN agencies and others to kick-start or reinforce emergency response across the world. Since its inception, the Fund has assisted hundreds of millions of people by providing \$6 billion to over 100 countries and territories thanks to the generous and consistent support from its donors, including almost \$4 billion for rapid response.

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