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Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja

Minister for International Development and the Pacific

Friday, 10 December 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

PARTNERSHIP WITH ROTARY AND UNICEF TO GIVE EVERY CHILD A FUTURE

The Australian Government will provide \$1.4 million to support childhood immunisation in Kiribati and Nauru in partnership with Rotary and UNICEF.

Minister for International Development and the Pacific Zed Seselja said Rotary's [Give Every Child a Future Project](#) supports the delivery of vaccines into nine Pacific island countries, with vaccine access implemented by UNICEF.

"These vaccines aim to reduce child mortality from two of the biggest killers of children under five – severe gastroenteritis caused by rotavirus, and pneumococcal disease which often causes pneumonia, meningitis, and other life-threatening conditions," Minister Seselja said.

"Kiribati atolls total 811 square kilometres of land spread across over 3.5 million square kilometres of ocean, requiring mammoth logistical efforts to deliver vaccines to children across the different islands."

"It is so important to ensure no child is left behind, no matter how difficult their home may be to reach, and that's what this partnership with UNICEF and Rotary is working towards."

"In Kiribati, Australia's contribution will support integration of HPV vaccine into the routine immunisation schedule, to help protect girls from cervical cancer in the future. It will also bolster access to routine childhood immunisations, including measles, which have dropped as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

"In Nauru, funding will support the introduction of rotavirus, pneumococcal disease and HPV into the immunisation schedule," Minister Seselja said.

The project also supports training of health workers and communication campaigns to ensure community acceptance of the new vaccines.

Rotary Project Director James Allen welcomed the partnership.

“Rotary is committed to helping our South Pacific family and we greatly appreciate the additional support of the Australian Government to improving the health and wellbeing of Pacifica communities. We especially thank Minister Seselja and DFAT for their support and Australia’s ongoing work in the South Pacific.”

UNICEF Pacific Representative Jonathan Veitch thanked the Australian Government and Rotary International for their critical long-term partnership with UNICEF to protect children and young people from these vaccine-preventable diseases.

“We understand that the current global priority is on immunisation against COVID-19, however we can’t afford to lose sight of other health priorities that also pose a significant threat to the lives of Pacific children.”

Rotary initiated this project to mark their Centenary in Australia and New Zealand in 2021. This program continues the public health work that Rotary has undertaken globally, particularly in the campaign to eliminate polio – a program that has also been strongly supported by the Australian Government.

In addition to providing support to our Pacific neighbours to respond to COVID-19, Australia is committed to ensuring essential health services continue to avoid a resurgence in preventable diseases.

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ZED SESELJA, LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA