



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Tarawa, Kiribati
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For Immediate Release

EU and Kiribati against climate change diseases

On 24 April 2014, Mr Andris Piebalgs European Commissioner for Development, Dr Kautu Tenaua, Kiribati Minister of Health and Medical Services, and Mr Michael Petterson, Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC), inaugurated the EU-funded Kiribati Public Health Laboratory.

"The EU is committed to support Kiribati in its fight against climate change adverse impacts. This laboratory will allow the government to better control diseases whose incidence is being modified in the last years due to changes in climate patterns," says Mr Piebalgs.

"The Public Health laboratory refurbishment and related capacity building activities are essential to safeguard the health of the I-Kiribati people, acknowledging that outbreaks of climate sensitive related diseases such as dengue fever, diarrhoea, and giardiasis are more frequent," says Dr Kautu Tenaua.

Mr Michael Petterson further added: "This environmental health project has critical impacts for Kiribati, as it is increasing the resilience of the I-Kiribati people to climate sensitive diseases. Changes in these diseases are being better understood through improved surveillance and analysis by Public Health."

The EUR 11.4 Million Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Islands States project assists Cook Island, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu in making their infrastructure, policies and national budgets inclusive of climate change impacts.

The project includes the implementation of pilot projects for national adaptation actions, through an improved cooperation with the regional organizations. In Kiribati, the EUR 0.5 million component provides the Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services with the necessary equipment and training to monitor and respond to the changing incidence of food, water, and vector-borne diseases.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is the project implementing partner.



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"The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders".

The European Commission is the EU's executive body.



Commissioner Piebalgs at the Official Opening



New Environmental Health Laboratory