

SPC provides water tests to PNG to help fight cholera outbreak

Friday, 08 January 2010



Friday 08 January 2010, SPC Headquarters (Noumea, New Caledonia) - Today, the Port Moresby office of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) will provide 2220 water quality testing tablets and related supplies to Mr Enoch Posanai, Executive Manager of Public Health at the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Department of Health, to help fight the cholera outbreak.

These supplies will enable the National Department of Health to carry out more than 1700 water chlorination level tests and 500 water pH tests.

Contaminated water and food are the main routes of transmission of cholera, which continues to spread in PNG. National response teams have been doing water quality testing in the outbreak zones of the affected provinces since the outbreak started last year. These tests have assisted with the overall control efforts so far.

The supplies being donated by SPC are meant to ensure that chlorinated water is safe to use. In PNG, this means that the tests can only be used in urban and peri-urban areas, where people are using chlorinated town water supplies. In rural areas, people use unchlorinated water.

As well as being a key tool in the government response to the ongoing cholera outbreak, water testing can provide valuable information for planning future water supply improvements in the country.

The donated testing supplies were requested by the PNG National Department of Health through the National Cholera Task Force. SPC procured them with support from the Australian and New Zealand government agencies for international development (AusAID and NZAID).

For more information, please contact: Dr James Wangi, Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Specialist at SPC based in Port Moresby - email: jamesw@webmail.spc.int, tel.: (675) 3259984.

Last Updated (Friday, 08 January 2010)