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September 24, 2020

Hon. Mr. Paul Blokhuis
Secretary of State, Health Wellness and Sport
Parnassusplein 5
2511 VX Den Haag

Dear Hon. Minister:

As you may be aware, on April 09 2020, CARPHA and the European Union (EU) concluded an Agreement for the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Programme of Support for Health Security Strengthening for Prevention and Control of Outbreaks of Communicable Diseases in the Caribbean. The four-year Project is aimed at strengthening health security in the region and is valued at €8 million of which approximately €5 million will be used to support a direct response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Caribbean. Included in the amount of €5 million is the sum of €3 million to procure vaccines and/or other treatments for COVID-19 when they become available.

CARPHA is aware that its Member States were invited to commit to COVAX, a global initiative aimed at working with vaccine manufacturers to provide countries worldwide equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, once they are licensed and approved. We are also cognizant of the fact that our Member States are required to submit their down payment by October 09, 2020 through the PAHO Revolving Fund, in order to secure access to vaccines under the COVAX facility. In that regard, CARPHA requested and received approval at the 22nd meeting of its Executive Board held on September 23, 2020 to use the sum of €3 million from the EU grant to make a contribution towards the required down payment by those Member States who have committed to the COVAX facility.

We already held a discussion with the EU and PAHO, who fully support the initiative in principle. There are administrative arrangements between CARPHA and PAHO that have to be arranged so that CARPHA can make the payment to PAHO's Revolving Fund to assist in the purchase of vaccines. In this regard, CARPHA will dispatch the necessary documents to PAHO today, in order to ensure that the down payment for all CARPHA Member States who agree, can benefit from CARPHA paying the down payment for them.

Please be assured of CARPHA's commitment to serving its Member States and saving lives and livelihoods.

Yours sincerely,

Joy St John

Dr. 5.1.2e
Executive Director

cc: 5.1.2e 1. Director of Public Health, St. Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean
5.1.2e Saba, Dutch Caribbean
5.1.2e , Head of Public Health, Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean