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WHO coordinates with DHL to deliver healthcare supplies to Pacific Islands

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The World Health Organization coordinated its latest cargo donation through DHL Global Forwarding (DHL), the freight specialist of Deutsche Post DHL Group, to support the islands in the Pacific fight against COVID-19. The shipments, worth over €650,000 contained medical devices such as oxygen concentrator sets, patient monitors and pulse oximeters, were airfreighted from Singapore to Fiji, where they will be dispatched to eight islands in the Pacific. The Pacific Islands, which had previously managed to avoid large outbreaks, experienced a recent spike in COVID-19 infections that doubled its total number of cases.

Due to the shortage of air capacity with passenger flights reduced by more than 90 per cent, the freight had to be broken down into three tranches, sent some two weeks apart. DHL Global Forwarding organised the first shipment from Singapore to Fiji on October 22, and will be stored till the last shipment arrives on November 19. From Fiji, special flights or shipping lines were then organised into eight markets, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Tonga, to ensure they reached their destination.

"WHO is happy to be working with our partners like DHL to be able to make this happen." said Dr Takeshi Kasai, Regional Director, Western Pacific, WHO.

"As one of the few global logistics players in the Islands and one with a geographic footprint as wide as ours, we are glad to be able to play a part in delivering the medical equipment and living up to our purpose of 'Connecting People, Improving Lives," said Kelvin Leung, CEO, DHL Global Forwarding Asia Pacific.

Since the start of the year, DHL Global Forwarding tapped on its network of life science and healthcare facilities, temperature-controlled solutions and customs clearance expertise to fly more than 1.3 million COVID-19 test kits from South Korea to Brazil, Ecuador, India, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Saudi Arabia. The freight forwarder also launched a dedicated 100-ton weekly air freight service for organisations and governments shipping health and medical-related items and other goods from China to Middle-East and Africa.