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PRESS RELEASE

PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL \$2 MILLION ALLOCATION FOR GRENADA'S COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS

March 4, 2020 – Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, has announced an additional \$2 million to further bolster Grenada's preparedness for COVID-19.

In an address to the nation Tuesday evening, Dr. Mitchell reassured the population that all the necessary measures are being taken to safeguard the country and its people.

He said, "We will not spare any effort in ensuring all the necessary measures are in place to protect our country, and therefore, we stand prepared to increase that figure if it becomes necessary, as the situation unfolds."

A more detailed plan on utilisation of the additional resources will come from the Ministry of Health but the Prime Minister spoke of "investing heavily in the procurement of additional medical and other supplies to further equip our hospitals and community health centres, and to outfit the treatment centres that are being established."

He noted too that schools are being provided with significant supplies and there is ongoing training for medical practitioners, other frontline staff and at-risk groups, including educators and hotel workers.

The Prime Minister said Government is also investing in the procurement of additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), "to ensure that persons on the frontline of the preventive effort are properly protected and their level of exposure is minimal.

At the policy level, several critical decisions have been taken, including the appointment of Dr. George Mitchell as the COVID-19 Coordinator. Dr. Mitchell, a former Chief Medical Officer, will manage the activities of all stakeholders as they relate to the disease.

Additionally, Dr. Mitchell disclosed that the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank has indicated its willingness to procure equipment for Grenada and other member states as part of its contribution to the fight against the virus.

Notwithstanding all of the measures at the Government and regional level, Dr. Mitchell said, persons must also accept individual responsibility for helping to curb the potential spread of the disease.

He said, Government's actions must be complemented by individual actions to follow the advice of health experts, as it relates to proper cough, sneeze and hand-washing techniques. Accepting individual responsibility in this scenario, might also require some temporary adjustments of our cultural norms and religious practices, so that we do not enable the spread of the virus."

In his national address, the Prime Minister also reiterated concern over the level of misinformation and propaganda about COVID-19 and encouraged the population to be "guided by the facts of the science, not the sensationalism of rumours."

Dr. Mitchell said, "Some elements in our country, are deliberately using these tactics to incite fear and panic, at a time when persons are already concerned about their health and mortality. There are credible sources of information available and I encourage you to use those credible sources."

In concluding, the Prime Minister called for unity in the effort to prevent the spread of the disease and he expressed abounding hope in the resilience of Grenadians and our ability to surmount challenges.

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