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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Supports Upgrade of State Emergency Operations Centers to Respond to COVID-19

Abuja – On June 16, 2020, U.S. Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard joined Executive Governor Benedict Ayade to virtually commission an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for Cross River State, which has been equipped with support of the American people to track and control the spread of the deadly COVID-19. Cross River is the first of nine states to receive the EOC upgrades.

In line with priorities set by Nigeria’s Center for Disease Control (NCDC), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programmed \$1.1 million (₦427 million) to upgrade and expand the capacity of the nine EOCs to strengthen the COVID-19 response in Nigeria.

The upgraded centers are now equipped as operational digital situation and communication rooms that power and coordinate the state COVID response and other disease outbreaks, utilizing data integration, warehousing, and visualization to provide state officials transparent and real-time information on COVID-19.

“With the commissioning of these EOCs, Nigeria can better coordinate the COVID-19 outbreak response and surveillance activities, as well as any other emergent disease outbreaks or disasters,” Ambassador Leonard said. “They will help turn the tide of the pandemic within their states, ultimately the nation, and flatten the COVID-19 curve.”

Over the last two decades, the United States has invested more than \$8 billion (₦3.1 trillion) in the Nigerian health sector. These upgrades have helped seamlessly and creatively transform previous investments and experiences to support Nigeria’s COVID response by leveraging the existing PEPFAR, tuberculosis, and other health investments.

These investments include boosting laboratory capacity, establishing mega labs, procuring diagnostic machines, augmenting sample transport, enhancing contact tracing, mobilizing risk management communications, and fine-tuning data analytics, outbreak management, and monitoring.

“Though Cross River continues to have no documented cases, we need to be on our guard to do even more to ensure the COVID-19 pandemic is brought to a speedy end or controlled to the best of our ability,” said Deputy Governor Evara Esu. “We want seize this opportunity to continually invite health practitioners to come to cross river and strengthen our health system. We really appreciate this support.”

Other states supported by USAID for the upgrades include Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Kano, Niger, and Oyo.

To date, the United States has dedicated more than \$237 million (₦92 billion) to the COVID response in Africa, with \$48.3 million (₦18 billion) supporting these efforts in Nigeria alone.

This includes the seconding of 55 USAID and other U.S. agency staff to Nigeria’s Presidential Task Force, providing valuable technical assistance under the NCDC’s COVID-19 response plan on epidemiology and surveillance, case management, infection prevention and control, risk communications, and humanitarian operations.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Dr. Douglas Chukwu, Cross River State team lead for USAID partner Jhpiego, conducts a virtual tour of the new Emergency Operations Center for U.S. Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard and Cross River Deputy Governor Evara Esu.

Relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our websites: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> and www.usaid.gov/ng