

Clinton announces US\$100m Climate change funding for Pacific

By Online Editor

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US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton

The United States will provide more than US\$100 million in climate-related funding to developing small island nations worldwide.

Of this amount, “more than US\$21 million will be targeted specifically for climate adaptation programmes and projects in Pacific Island countries over the next two years,” US secretary of state Hillary Clinton announced in Port Moresby yesterday.

She said in recognition of the real dangers posed by climate change, the US was working to improve disaster awareness, including advance warning systems.

“These are just the kind of far-reaching, country-led programmes that the United States is looking to support across the Pacific,” Mrs Clinton said.

She said the United States aid agency, USAID, and other US agencies would work in partnership with Pacific Island countries to decide how best to use the funding to achieve meaningful results.

Clinton arrived in Port Moresby yesterday for a four-hour visit before leaving for Australia and New Zealand to complete her Asia-Pacific tour.

Her first stop was at the Port Moresby Technical College mangrove site.

Minister for Environment and Conservation Benny Allan, acting project coordinator of the community-based management and sustainable utilisation of mangrove resources at Bootless Bay outside Port Moresby Dr Augustine Mungkaje and Mazzella Maniwavie, project official and daughter of the project’s late founder Thomas Maniwavie, were present to meet Clinton.

At the site, Maniwavie presented the US secretary of state with a mangrove seedling which was planted by students from the technical college.

Mrs Clinton said mangroves played a central and unappreciated role in the lives of coastal Pacific islanders across this vast region.

“Mangroves provide basic livelihoods, coastal preservation, protection from storm surges and even land reclamation,” she added.

Given their importance, the US embassy in Port Moresby would fund the Motupore Island Research Centre and Tubuserea Lavadai Mangrove Reforestation Association project.

“It is a pleasure to visit the Motupore Island Research Centre and to see first-hand the innovative, high-impact work being done here to protect Papua New Guinea’s mangrove forests.”

Clinton said deforestation of the world’s coastal and interior forests accounted for between 15% and 20% of carbon emissions, which were the leading causes of global warming.

“This statistic is sobering, but it points to a solution. “If we can protect forests like these by cracking down on illegal logging and practising sustainable development, we can make significant progress toward reducing the greater threat of climate change.”

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL/PACNEWS