USAID FUNDS NEW INNOVATIONS TO FIGHT FUTURE DISEASE OUTBREAKS

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) today announced $3.3 million for five more winners of the *Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge, bringing the total investment to $30 million*. From unmanned aerial vehicles delivering critical medical supplies in remote areas to the use of big data and machine learning to prevent future disease outbreaks, innovators across the globe are responding with solutions to better address and manage outbreaks of Zika and other infectious diseases.

"*The Grand Challenge to Combat Zika and Future Threats* is attracting the world's brightest minds to solve this global challenge," said Wendy Taylor, Director, Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact at USAID. "By working together with leading innovators and our partners in government, business, and civil society, we will quickly scale up new innovations to help communities everywhere including the world's most vulnerable to combat Zika and prevent future outbreaks."

The innovations developed for Zika may also have broad application to counter other threats. Among the newest innovations, awardees introduced groundbreaking concepts to utilize Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and collaborations across the public and private sectors to improve disease surveillance.

USAID launched the *Grand Challenge* in April 2016 to provide up to $30 million to develop smart and scalable ideas to address the current Zika outbreak and improve the ability to prevent, detect, and respond to future infectious disease outbreaks. In just two months, innovators from around the world submitted nearly 900 ideas that cut across mosquito control, personal and household protection, diagnostics, and community engagement. After hearing pitches from top innovators, U.S. Government experts and international partners selected the most promising ideas through a rapid, rigorous review process. These five awardees follow the August 2016 announcement of 21 awardees who focused on mitigating the spread and impact of this year's Zika outbreak in South and Central America.

Winner Highlights include:

"Unmanned Aerial Vehicles" vs. Driving: Replacing hours of driving on treacherous roads with flights by fully autonomous flying vehicles, the *Vayu* team will deliver critical medical supplies to remote villages and ferry back lab samples to medical facilities. *Vayu* will work closely with local health workers to reach the most isolated areas made inaccessible by poor roads.

Foiling Zika Mosquitoes with Sterile "Love Mates": *WeRobotics* - a co-creator of Flying Labs, in collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organization / International Atomic Energy Agency (FAO/IAEA) will develop new techniques for vector control by using UAVs for aerial release of sterile mosquitoes. Mosquitoes that mate with them produce no offspring.

Keeping it Cool: *Dimagi* and the *Arnhold Institute for Global Health* will forecast disease hot spots by identifying communities where little to no data exists, known as cold spots. Using predictive algorithm technology, the team will build a platform to identify cold spots and protect the most vulnerable communities from becoming disease hot spots.

Other game changing solutions include using telecom data, collected from mobile phones, to enhance Zika surveillance; and mapping the risk of international disease spread using data visualization.

For a full list of awardees please visit: **www.usaid.gov/grandchallenges/zika/nominees**. For more information on the Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge, visit**www.usaid.gov/grandchallenges/zika**.

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