

SCHIPHOL, 16 FEBRUARY 2021

## **KLM and Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport begin transport of Covid-19 vaccines to the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

Today saw the first flight from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol to Bonaire and Aruba carrying a shipment of Covid-19 vaccines destined for the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is the first of several shipments that will deliver the vaccines to the various islands in the coming weeks. The vaccines were loaded into the aircraft in the presence of Dutch State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport, Paul Blokhuis, responsible for healthcare in the Dutch Caribbean, and Pieter Elbers, CEO of KLM.

The Air France KLM Martinair Cargo division handles more than 80,000 pharmaceutical shipments annually and has many years of experience transporting temperature-controlled medicines. The distribution of Covid-19 vaccines poses specific transport and security challenges and the division has developed a dedicated process to ensure swift, reliable and safe distribution.

*“Many people have been working flat out for a year to get the coronavirus under control in the Caribbean region of the Kingdom. The first vaccines to reach all the islands this week mark a hopeful turning point in the struggle to end this crisis.”*

**Paul Blokhuis, Dutch State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport**

*“The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine is very good news for us all. It brings us closer to ending the pandemic and the terrible crisis we have been facing worldwide for more than a year now. We worked with our cargo division in recent months to prepare swift and secure vaccine transport worldwide and we have now embarked on this highly complex and demanding task. Today's transport is special because it is the first in a series of KLM flights to Bonaire, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten (including Saba and Sint Eustatius) carrying Covid-19 vaccines. KLM has a long and unique history of cooperation with the islands and we enjoy a warm relationship with them as a result. The Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are also going through a difficult time and we are proud and happy to be of service to their people in this way.”*

**Pieter Elbers, CEO KLM**

### **Dry ice**

Each of the various vaccines has its own temperature requirements: +2 to +8 degrees Celsius, frozen at -20 degrees Celsius, or between -70 and -80 degrees Celsius. It is vital that these temperatures are guaranteed throughout the entire transport operation. The Pfizer vaccine shipped to Bonaire and Aruba today has been packed with dry ice. This will keep it at the right temperature for several days, as long the containers are stored in an environment of between +2 to +25 degrees Celsius. Upon arrival on Bonaire and Aruba, the vaccines are immediately stored in a suitable temperature-controlled environment.



### **About Air France KLM Martinair Cargo**

The Air France-KLM Group is a global airline group with a strong European base. Its main areas of business are passenger transport, cargo transport and aeronautical maintenance. Air France KLM Martinair Cargo is the Air France-KLM Group's dedicated air cargo business. Air France-KLM Cargo is a member of SkyTeam Cargo ([www.skyteamcargo.com](http://www.skyteamcargo.com)) offering an even larger network coverage.

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