17 June 2016 – The World Health Organization (WHO)/the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and partners have set out their strategic response to Zika which will place a greater focus on preventing and managing medical complications caused by Zika virus infection. To date, US$121.9 million are necessary to effectively implement the *Zika Strategic Response Plan*, *July 2016 to December 2017*.

"Much has been learned about Zika virus infection, how it spreads, the consequences of infection and priorities for its control since we developed the initial response framework," said WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. "The response now requires a unique and integrated strategy that places support for women and girls of child-bearing age at its core."

The revised *Zika Strategic Response Plan* includes a greater focus on preventing and managing medical complications caused by Zika virus infection and expanding health systems' capacities for that purpose. Risk communication targeting pregnant women, their partners, households and communities will be central to prevention efforts to ensure they have the information they need to protect themselves.

Other elements include integrated vector management, sexual and reproductive health counselling as well as health education and care within the social and legal contexts of each country where Zika virus is being transmitted.

The plan highlights several specific characteristics of the Zika outbreak that require a collaborative, global response and support. These include

- the potential for further international spread of Zika virus given the wide distribution of *Aedes* mosquitoes that are capable of transmitting Zika virus,
- the lack of population immunity in areas where Zika virus is circulating for the first time and which allows the disease to spread quickly,
- the absence of vaccines, specific treatments and rapid diagnostic tests, and
- inequalities in access to sanitation, information and health services in affected areas.

Funding

More than 60 partners are engaged in the global response to Zika, up from 23 partners in February 2016. To date, WHO, PAHO and 14 partners (out of the more than 60) have expressed funding needs in the combined amount of US$121.9 million to implement the revised plan from now until December 2017.

"Coherent funding mechanisms are essential for successful implementation of this revised Strategic Response Plan," said Dr Chan. In May 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General established a UN Zika Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund to generate and ensure the effective use of the required funding.

More information

Zika Strategic Response Plan, July 2016 to December 2017: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/246091/1/WHO-ZIKV-SRF-16.3-eng.pdf
More on Zika response funding: http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/response/contribution/en/
More on Zika and complications: http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/en/