



# LACRO

## Humanitarian Situation Report

unicef 

### SITUATION IN NUMBERS

## Highlights

Zika virus (ZIKV) has spread rapidly to at least 31 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2015. Clusters of microcephaly and other neurological disorders reported in affected areas were declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by World Health Organization (WHO) on 1 February 2016. ZIKV is transmitted through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito that also transmits dengue and chikungunya. The symptoms are generally a mild fever usually accompanied by muscle or joint pain. There is no vaccine or treatment for the disease. The ZIKV outbreak intensified in October 2015 and there has been a surge of microcephaly in Brazil – a congenital malformation where babies are born with smaller than normal head size and underdeveloped brains that can lead to severe developmental disorders. While there is no definitive evidence linking the virus and microcephaly, there has been an abnormal increase of birth defects, with 863 confirmed cases of microcephaly or central nervous system (CNS) malformation reported by the Brazilian Ministry of Health from October 2015 through 16 March 2016. WHO has warned that the virus could infect as many as three to four million people within 12 months in the Americas. El Niño and La Niña weather phenomenon, and their impact on the environment and sanitation, are expected to aggravate the situation in 2016.

## UNICEF's Planned Response with partners:

### 1. Prevent transmission of ZIKV through:

- Community engagement and community for development (C4D) strategies that will support behaviour adaptation for personal protection through.
- Vector control (reducing breeding sites/vector density) and C4D activities through national capacity development of government institutions and NGO partners

### 2. Mitigate the impact on families:

- Provide care and support to families, including multi-disciplinary management of microcephaly and other potential conditions.

### 16 March 2016

## LAC Countries reporting ZIKV local transmission

with UNICEF presence: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, Venezuela.

## 863

Confirmed cases of Microcephaly and/or CNS malformation from October 2015 to 16 March 2016 in Brazil

**Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname, and Venezuela have reported increases in cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome**

## 200 million

People to be reached in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016 through Risk Communication and Community Engagement

## UNICEF LAC Appeal 2016 LACRO: US\$ 8.8 million

*5 million have also be requested for Global Response*

Overall Funding  
needs: (US\$)

**8.8 MM**

Funding  
Gap: (US\$)

**6.4 MM**



## Justification for UNICEF's action in the Region

- ZIKV is spreading rapidly across the region, with the high probability of further spread globally. It is transmitted by the same mosquito as dengue and chikungunya, which have accounted for a significant burden of disease in the region including in children; vector control activities have not adequately reduced the disease burden and prevented the spread of these diseases.
- Many of the communities at risk and affected by the ZIKV outbreak are also the most vulnerable and marginalized and are prioritized for UNICEF support
- Microcephaly cases, associated with the ZIKV outbreak in Brazil to date, have increased twentyfold in recent months, with devastating effects and longer-term implications on the newborns and their families, putting strain on the public health system and support mechanisms of care givers and families.
- The response and reaction to ZIKV may pose challenges for the reproductive rights of families. It is important to rapidly ensure the right messaging for advocacy and public communication to avoid fear and stigma leading to adverse social outcomes of women, adolescent girls and families.

## Humanitarian leadership and coordination

- UNICEF LACRO works with UNDG-LAC, and REDLAC interagency sector working groups, sub-regional and inter-governmental organizations to contribute to a coordinated regional approach and support by: Communicating and meeting with regional sectorial groups (Health, WASH, Nutrition, Communication/C4D), analyzing sectoral gaps, developing key messages, regional strategies and strategic guidelines. At inter-agency level, UNICEF also provides inputs to coordinated policy position of the UN system.
- At global level, UNICEF contributed to the elaboration of WHO led global Strategic Response Framework highlighting UNICEF role in Surveillance, Vector Control, Community Mobilization and Risk Communication, Care for those affected and Research and Development. UNICEF actively participates to existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) to leverage coordination.
- Regular meetings with WHO in Geneva, with PAHO at regional and CO levels, ensure close cooperation and alignment between UNICEF's and WHO's strategies.

## Humanitarian Strategy

In collaboration with WHO/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), UNICEF is scaling up its support to all affected countries. Using its network of 24 offices serving 35 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean, UNICEF is working in support of national and local governments, with the following goals: a) control the spread of Zika Virus, b) mitigate its impact on children and their families, in particular in the most disadvantaged communities, c) influence the market to help drive the development of rapid diagnostics and vaccines.

UNICEF will draw upon its expertise in Communication for Development (C4D) and use a multi-sectoral approach to protect and support families and communities, and build their knowledge and capacity to protect themselves. Building on its long-standing partnership with national and local authorities, civil society organizations and community networks, UNICEF focuses on social mobilization of the most disadvantaged communities in order to increase their protection against the virus as well as preventing its further spread. Information about vector control measures to reduce the burden in homes, community sites, and schools will be disseminated. UNICEF will also prioritize the provision of care and support to families affected by Zika Virus, including management of microcephaly through family care, social protection, early childhood development, and nutrition.

Preparedness and response systems for all potential countries at-risk will be supported through global and regional level coordination. Rapid Response Resources comprising of health, C4D and other technical experts will be deployed to affected countries according to needs. Monitoring systems to track progress in changing knowledge and behavior will be set up to complement the epidemiological analysis done by PAHO and CDC. UNICEF will first establish Zika response operations in the most affected countries and will implement the strategies and activities based on assessments of needs, national capacity, available resources, and partners as well as UNICEF comparative advantage.

## Summary Analysis of Programme response

As the outbreak situation develops the region, UNICEF Country Offices (COs) are engaged in various phases of the response. Some of them, such as Nicaragua and Panama are currently adjusting their implementation plans in coordination with national authorities and partners, while others are already implementing actions and reporting some preliminary targets achieved. The overall view of the ongoing response may be summarized in the following actions.

- Establish and support coordination mechanisms and strategic partnerships at national and sub-national levels particularly in the areas of Risk Communication and Community Engagement;
- Design and disseminate national and subnational communications strategies and plans to guide core messaging for individual and community empowerment for ZIKV control and prevention via mass, social and digital media;
- Coordinate and manage knowledge to inform risk communication and community engagement strategies for community-based vector control and for mitigating the impact on families;
- Scale up of community mobilization and engagement programmes through leveraging existing platforms, partnerships and integrating the response into initiatives already being supported/implemented by UNICEF in the countries
- Facilitate capacity development and systems strengthening to enable government authorities and social networks with knowledge, skills and tools to conduct social mobilization at community level.

As with the general overview above, the country specific response activities summarized below indicate start-up and ongoing response activities in each country. Some of them, depending on the spread of the outbreak, are at an early stage, setting the enabling conditions, the necessary agreements and networks to accomplish the targets, while others such as Brazil and more recently Colombia are furthered advanced reviewing accomplished tasks, following up, and reporting concrete figures of their achievements.

### Argentina

- Supporting the development of a risk communication and community engagement training packages for health promoters and schools;
- Supporting the ministries of Health and Education on community-based vector control activities at house hold level, particularly in the high risk province of Misiones;
- Conducting local studies on barriers and enablers towards community engagement for vector control;
- Providing support to national provincial authorities in the strengthening of microcephaly and GBS surveillance mechanism.

### Belize

- Identifying hotspots for ZIKV within Cayo and Belize Districts.
- Training trainers on community engagement and C4D activities to support the training of key facilitators to support dissemination of information in schools and communities by municipalities.
- Strengthening the ongoing WASH in Schools activities in primary schools in most vulnerable districts to trigger community-based vector control interventions.

### Bolivia

- The Departmental ZIKV alert announced in the department of Pando due to overflowing river has promoted a speed up of response processes that include:
- Improving coordination between WASH and Education on communication about vector control. A ZIKV informative bulletin was developed for the Amazonian region. Structured focus groups and specific messages for target audiences, boosting the use of social media platforms for vector control activities are developed.
- Subnational Social Welfare Services and Children and Adolescent Municipality Defender Offices have been enhanced in four departments.

### Brazil

- In the State of Piauí, 241 participants – half of them, adolescents – of 80 municipalities attended the last capacity-building meeting of UNICEF Seal of Approval. These trainings are taking place in Semi-arid region until 31 March and integrate.
- As part of the Urban Centre Platform, an UNICEF's initiative. Last week, 44 adolescents from the Transformation Agents group participated in a survey conducted by Pereira Passos Institute, in Rio de Janeiro, discussing on strategies to fight the mosquito and to reduce the number of breeding grounds. With a representative sample, the results drive the focus of future communication and mobilization campaigns.

- UNICEF trained 50 municipal managers of the State of Amazonas, as a first group from 174 municipalities at high-risk for mosquito infection. Municipal managers will disseminate the acquired knowledge in their municipalities using the Strengthened Brazilian Family kit, a set of five albums that explain, simply and practically, the care that children require from gestation until the age of six. One of the workshop's focus was the control and prevention of the spread of the *Aedes Aegyptus* mosquito.
- In the State of Piauí, 241 participants – half of them, adolescents – of 80 municipalities attended the last capacity-building meeting of UNICEF Seal of Approval. These trainings are taking place in Semi-arid region until 31 March and integrate
- UNICEF's has posted 47 contents in social media reaching 7.9 million people raising awareness of protection and reduction of breeding grounds. UNICEF is also working with Facebook, Twitter and Google to develop a specific communication strategy and messages.
- Fostering national and state-level press engagement using high level spokespersons to underscore the rights of infants and pregnant women to an appropriate health response.
- UNICEF spokesperson interviews were broadcasted through more than 20 media channels, both national and international. Radio spots messages on prevention were also broadcasted by more than 40 radio stations countrywide and specifically ZIKV and Dengue affected municipalities.

## Colombia

- Leading the WASH Cluster and has included ZIKV as a priority in the agenda item. The Cluster is in the process of identifying key issues and messages relating to WASH for use by all members of the Cluster.
- Contributing to the inter-agency technical communications group, led by WHO/PAHO and UNIC.
- Fostering agreement between Ministries of Education Health on the use of schools to disseminate key messages on ZIKV prevention.
- Developing key messages for use in behaviour change campaigns, jointly with the Ministry of Health and WHO/PAHO, on vector control in communities. A module on ZIKV prevention is under development for inclusion in training programmes directed to health and nutrition workers at departmental and municipal levels.
- Developing a 4W to map areas of intervention out actors and planned prevention activities related on adequate storage of water and management of solid waste; vector control in areas of intervention.

## Cuba

- Supporting Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) to develop a community WASH C4D strategy to prevent waterborne diseases and vector originated diseases.
- Supporting national and local authorities, in collaboration with other UN agencies, for the implementation of an effective national communication campaign on vector control.
- Under the leadership of PAHO/WHO, UNICEF supported the government's participation in coordination meetings with MINSAP to coordinate the response.
- Supporting the Maternal-Infant Health Program (PAMI) early diagnosis equipment needs.
- Supporting the national C4D campaign to prevent the spread of the illness.

## Dominican Republic

- Supporting the Ministry of Health to carry out quarterly entomological surveys to identify provinces with higher risk of mosquitoes breeding sites;
- Training of health staff, early child development workers and social protection workers to adequately support the provision of child-family friendly services;
- Developing Communication activities directed to children, adolescents and pregnant women through mass media, social networks and community engagement through health centers, schools, day care centers, children and adolescents councils, local protection boards, juvenal detention centers, communities, churches, and private sector.

## Eastern Caribbean Area

- Developing a set of ZIKV culturally relevant communication prevention messages targeting school-age children;
- Organizing a refresher training for teachers on teaching HFLE with emphasis on managing the Environment, in 5 countries: Anguilla, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda and Tobago
- Provisioning of water tanks to 18 schools in Dominica;
- Supporting students councils in selected schools in Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda and Tobago to engage school environment clean-up activities for vector control.

## Ecuador

- Training of Ministry of Health key staff on Risk Communication and Community Engagement on ZIKV, Chikungunya and Dengue prevention and vector control programming, particularly in the priority cities of Guayas, Esmeraldas, Manabi, Los Rios and El Oro provinces;
- Developing awareness raising and prevention campaign for the most vulnerable population on the ZIKV associated risks in 12 high risk urban areas targeting more than 800.000 people;
- In coordination with MOH, has provided technical assistance on WASH support to the municipalities to improve water and sanitation services in the at-risk cities of Esmeraldas, Guayaquil and Durán.

## El Salvador

- Developing campaigns through mass and social media and the mobilization of social networks in 263 municipalities;
- Networking the WASH National Subcommittee to support the community-based vector control interventions at community level;
- Promoting equitable access to services and respect of human rights for marginalized and at risk communities, (e.g. reproductive health rights of women, disabilities, etc.)

## Guatemala

- Implement Risk Communication and Community Engagement interventions through traditional midwives, Social Welfare Secretariat (SBS) personnel, school teachers, school children to promote ZIKV preventive behaviour and mobilize communities to participate in vector control;
- Training of the MoH health workers and traditional birth attendants in 5 priority Departments on detection and management of ZIKV.

## Guyana

- Launching a communication campaign to support the national ZIKV coordination committee with the activation of the Communication campaign through national media and vector control outreach teams reaching 750,000 people so far, with focus on pregnant women and those who may become pregnant in 4 Interior Administrative Regions; Communication campaign initiated already.
- Supporting the reproductive health and counselling services for pregnant women with a special focus on teenagers in 5 Interior Administrative Regions including the distribution of repellents.
- A Formal agreement has been established with the Guyana Red Cross Society (GRCS) for community WASH outreach interventions focusing on safe water storage in 5 Administrative Regions.

## Haiti

- Producing and launching a multimedia communication campaign to raise awareness and promote preventive behaviors for ZIKV;
- Supporting community-based vector control interventions, through the mobilization of religious leaders, schools and other influential networks.

## Honduras

- Developing short and medium term communication campaign with schools and communities.
- Developing specific communication messages to be broadcasted in television, radio and press. Training and information to the school community in association with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross, Plan International, national NGOs and community-based organizations.
- In coordination with PAHO, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Departmental Boards of Education and Municipal Authorities, UNICEF together with Plan International has supported the mass media communication and C4D strategy.
- Messages and communication material were developed and disseminated through social media and networks. More than 89,000 people visited the material on Facebook.

## Jamaica

- Organizing communications for development activities, UN country team preparedness, and convening of international development partners and Government of Jamaica, at key levels. Engagement of national emergency response authorities.
- Convened strategic response planning meetings (UN, bilateral and GoJ).

## Mexico

- Producing and broadcasting mass, social and digital media campaigns targeting approximately 50 million people on prevention of mosquito-borne diseases in partnership with CNN, Televisa and TV Azteca; spots for Community Radio Associations. The messages will be translated into the local indigenous languages.



- Supporting national and subnational authorities in the conception and dissemination of child-friendly materials regarding the prevention and the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases in 20 states with high incidence of Dengue and Chikungunya targeting almost 23 million children and adolescents.
- Mobilizing youth volunteers to participate in community-based vector control initiatives through the innovative UNICEF U-Report digital platform and through existing local school councils.
- Develop and implement tailored community engagement strategies targeting pregnant women benefiting of social welfare and Health initiative "Prospera Digital pilot".

## Paraguay

- Designing and implementing a baseline survey on knowledge, attitudes and practices related to personal protection and participation in vector control interventions.
- Conceiving and roll out a nation-wide behavior change mass and social media campaign promotive personal protection and community engagement in vector control interventions.
- Providing technical assistance to design waste water disposal systems (waste water collection, connection to public sewage systems, infiltration pits, etc.), particularly in floods affected areas and internally displaced camps.
- Engaging with government institutions (National Social Action Secretariat, ministries of Health and Education, National Secretariat for Children) to ensure the inclusion of ZIKV affected children and their families in existing social protection programmes (ABRAZO, Tekopora, Kunu'u).
- Designing and publishing a national care and support guide for ZIKV affected families and roll out a training of trainers of health personnel.

## Peru

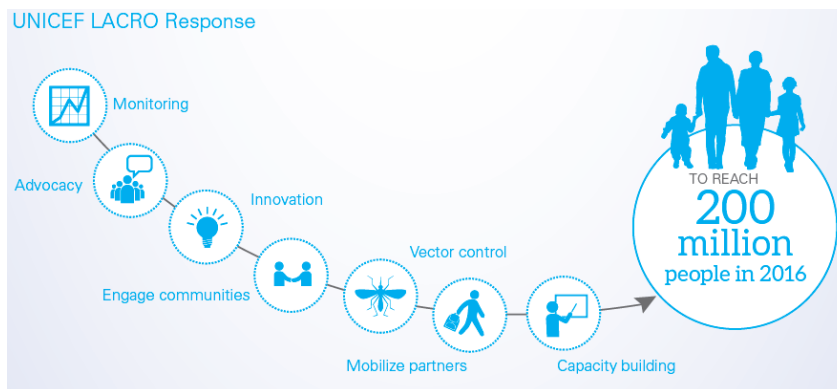
- Supporting the national Government and regional health authorities to design ZIKV Risk Communication and Community-based vector control interventions in 15 priority districts in the Amazon Region and reach more than 1.1 million people;
- Adapting and disseminating culturally appropriate behavior change communication materials in the Amazon region in support of local governments.
- Supporting community-based vector control (reduction of mosquito breeding sites / density) through WASH;
- Supporting local authorities to train on ZIKV Risk Communication and community-based vector control community leaders, community health promoters and teachers in the Amazon region.

## Suriname

- Supporting the national ZIKV coordination committee with the activation of the C4D campaign through national media and vector control outreach teams, with focus on culturally appropriate ZIKV communications materials in line with national standards for the 3 Interior Administrative Districts; A communication campaign is being implemented with assistance from UNICEF and PAHO, so far billboards were placed in Paramaribo, a ZIKV website ([www.voorkomzika.nu](http://www.voorkomzika.nu)) established and continuously updated, and brochures distributed house by house
- Supporting community WASH outreach activities focusing on safe water storage to reduce vector breeding sites in 3 Interior Administrative Districts; Formal agreement with Medical Mission for community WASH outreach interventions is being finalized focusing on safe water storage in Interior Administrative Districts.
- Providing awareness sessions on reproductive health and counselling services for pregnant women with a special focus on teenagers in 3 Interior Administrative Districts including the distribution of medically approved and culturally appropriate vector repellents.

## Venezuela

- Designing, producing and disseminating mass and social media packages (radio spots, PSA, infographics, posters and social media pack), communication materials for health care centers and school games for schools to maximize the reach;
- Producing a master-class video on pregnancy and ZIKV to be distributed to health staff and students to strengthen the care and support component of the response.
- The communication strategy was developed to deliver key messages on ZIKV personal protection and promote the participation in community-based vector control and mobilize alliances with media channels as well as social networks and platforms to fast-track the reach.



## Funding

UNICEF is appealing for total of US\$ 13.8 million in order to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of children and families affected by the Zika outbreak. This includes UNICEF humanitarian response in Latin America and the Caribbean, requiring US\$ 8.8 million, as well as its global outreach effort in preparedness, research and development, amounting to US\$ 5 million.

Against the 2016 HAC requirement of US\$ 8.8 million for Zika response in the LAC region, UNICEF LACRO has received US\$ 1.9 million (21%) and has reallocated US\$ 510,000 from regular resources to provide humanitarian assistance to children and families affected by the outbreak. Additional funding is required in order to support national responses for the countries facing the explosive spread of Zika. Needs will be regularly reassessed as the situation evolves. Due to the complexity of the epidemic with multiple countries and different needs, flexible resources at the global level will be essential to respond where needs are greatest and reach the most disadvantaged communities.

Latin America and the Caribbean	2016 Requirements (US\$)	Regular Funds reallocated	Funds received	Funding Gap	
		US\$	US\$	US \$	%
Social mobilization and response activities in affected countries	4,560,000	510,000	1,895,000	6,394,500	73
Rapid Response Teams	2,520,000				
Regional support to countries	1,740,000				
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,820,000</b>	<b>2,405,500</b>			

## Next SitRep: 01/04/2016

UNICEF Zika virus: [http://www.unicef.org/appeals/Zika\\_response.html](http://www.unicef.org/appeals/Zika_response.html)

### Who to contact for further information:

**Andres A Lopez**  
Regional Chief of Communication  
LACRO  
Panama  
Tel. +507 301-7484  
Email [aalopez@unicef.org](mailto:aalopez@unicef.org)

**Stefan Stefansson**  
Regional Chief of Partnerships  
LACRO  
Panama  
Tel. +507 301-7489  
Email: [sstefansson@unicef.org](mailto:sstefansson@unicef.org)

**Donatella Massai**  
LACRO ZIKV Cell Coordinator  
Panama  
Tel. +507 301-7456  
Email: [dmassai@unicef.org](mailto:dmassai@unicef.org)

UNICEF LAC ZIKA VIRUS SITREP



© UNICEF/UNI178929/RAMOS

