

## **Open statement on Zika virus**

As organizations supportive of a robust and comprehensive public health response to the rapid spread of Zika virus in the Latin America and Caribbean region, we write to express our support for efforts by the U.S. government to provide resources to aid in the global response to this international public health emergency. The spread of Zika virus, and the particular health risks it poses to women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, highlights significant gaps in access to reproductive health care in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

We call on the U.S. government response to Zika virus to include comprehensive reproductive, maternal, and child health services through bilateral programs as well as through contributions to UNFPA. In order to support women in making and carrying out decisions about their health, this must specifically include access to family planning information, education, services, and contraceptive commodities including emergency contraception. It must also provide maternal and child health services to support healthy pregnancy outcomes and families with children who have microcephaly. In particular, UNFPA, with a presence in over 40 countries in the region, is best equipped to provide these services immediately to the communities most in need with additional support from the U.S. government and in coordination with the World Health Organization and Pan-American Health Organization.

We know there is still much to learn about Zika virus and the response will be complex and require coordination at the global, regional, and national levels. While the response to Zika virus may evolve, one thing is clear: the U.S. government must prioritize access to comprehensive reproductive and maternal health care services in its response to meet the needs of women and families during this health emergency and beyond.