

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 may pose 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.

1. Advocates for Youth
2. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
3. Better World Campaign
4. Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
5. Center for Reproductive Rights
6. Institute for Science and Human Values
7. International Center for Research on Women
8. International Women's Convocation
9. International Women's Health Coalition
10. Ipas
11. NARAL Pro-Choice America
12. National Abortion Federation
13. National Council of Jewish Women
14. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
15. National Network of Abortion Funds
16. National Organization for Women
17. National Women's Health Network
18. PAI
19. Pathfinder International
20. Physicians for Reproductive Health
21. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
22. Population Connection Action Fund
23. Population Institute
24. Religious Institute
25. Reproductive Health Technologies Project
26. Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
27. Sierra Club
28. Universal Access Project
29. National Women's Law Center