Addressing Zika Concerns

Current status

• Zika virus is widespread
• Progress in understanding Zika consequences but many “unknowns”
• Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)

Risk to the Western Pacific Region

• Highly likely to further spread in the Region
• Possibility of observing complications associated with Zika virus

Management approach

• Detect and monitor cases, outbreaks and complications
• Prepare for appropriate responses
• Reduce vector densities, especially in high risk locations
• Develop a long-term strategy to mitigate the impact of Zika
Countries and territories that have reported evidence of mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission since 2007

Countries and territories with reported Zika virus outbreak from 2015 onwards

Countries and territories that have reported microcephaly potentially associated with Zika

Countries and territories that have reported an increased incidence of GBS potentially associated with Zika
Western Pacific Region: second most affected region

Yap Island, Federated States of Micronesia (2007)
- First major outbreak (first IHR notification)
- No severe cases and no complications

French Polynesia (2013 - 2014)
- Simultaneous outbreak of Zika and dengue
- Increased reports of microcephaly and GBS
- Retrospective studies contributed to present knowledge

Summary
- 19 countries and areas have reported locally-acquired cases since 2007
- 13 countries and areas in 2016
Understanding the relationship between Zika and associated complications

Methodology

- causality framework
- systematic and non-systematic literature review
- panel of experts

Conclusion

The most likely explanation of available evidence is that:

- Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of congenital brain abnormalities including microcephaly
- Zika virus infection is a trigger of Guillain-Barré syndrome

Krauer F, et al for WHO Zika Causality Working Group
September 2016
WHO Incident Management System activated at all levels of the Organization to coordinate preparedness and response.
Western Pacific Regional Response

Response is guided by:

- Zika Strategic Response Plan
- IHR Emergency Committee Recommendations
- Integrated Vector Management
- Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases (APSED)
Regional Response: examples

- **Incident management system** activated
- **Ongoing risk assessments** at the country, regional and global level
- **Scenario-based risk communication package** developed
- **External Quality Assurance** for dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus testing
- **Technical support** in vector management and care and support
- Contribution to **research**
Technical Assistance

13 experts in 5 technical areas
- Public health emergency planning
- Surveillance and risk assessment
- Care and support
- Integrated vector management
- Risk communication

20 missions

7 countries and areas
ASEAN Health Ministers’ Meeting on Zika

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Video Conference – 19 September 2016

- 10 ASEAN Member States
- WHO

Commitment in 5 Areas of Work

- in-country disease surveillance
- leverage the IHR for information sharing and risk assessment
- regional surveillance and response
- vector control, access to diagnostic testing, national laboratory networks and risk communication
- research and sharing of new knowledge and best practices
Current Risk Assessment

It is highly likely that the Region will continue to report cases and possibly new outbreaks of Zika virus infection

- Competent vectors widely distributed
- High volume of travel
- Uncertainty about population immunity

Considering the uncertainties, the possibility of observing complications associated with Zika virus infection may increase

- Current scientific consensus that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of congenital brain abnormalities and Zika virus infection is a trigger of Guillain-Barré syndrome
Recommended Actions

- Strengthen existing surveillance systems to promptly detect cases and complications

- Establish or strengthen systems to provide care, services and support to affected individuals, families and communities

- Establish or strengthen systems to contribute to improving understanding of Zika through supporting research

- Develop a long-term strategy to mitigate the impact of this public health threat