

RESPONDING TO THE ZIKA VIRUS

The rapid spread of the Zika virus has heightened global concerns about mosquito-borne diseases. Zika, in particular, is of high risk to women and newborns because of its link to life-threatening birth defects.

New research supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre in Venezuela and Colombia is scaling up successful ways to tackle the *Aedes aegypti*, or yellow fever, mosquito. This mosquito can transmit three viral diseases—chikungunya, dengue and Zika. Based on earlier research on dengue, showing the value of targeting mosquitoes before they develop fully, Fundación Santa Fe de Bogotá is working with universities, the private sector, city officials and civil society in Girardot, Colombia, to reach 10,000 households at risk. Citizens are now covering water containers and taking other measures to deprive mosquitoes of breeding sites, and protecting their homes with locally made, insecticide-treated curtains and window screens. It is also now mandatory for new homes to have covers on large water tanks.

The Public Health Agency of Canada also supports the efforts of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) to increase global emergency preparedness and response activities in the Americas. PAHO provided tools and guidance on effectively responding to the Zika virus. This included:

- mosquito control,
- laboratory testing of the new virus,
- surveillance of microcephaly (a birth defect where a baby's head is smaller than expected),
- case management (such as preparing health facilities and health-care workers for surges in demand of specialized care), and
- enhanced risk communication capacities.

Global Affairs Canada also provided \$1 million in emergency assistance to the Americas region via the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and PAHO. This funding helped enhance preparedness and health emergency risk management in affected and at-risk countries. It also strengthened vector surveillance and control, and provided care and support to families affected by the Zika virus.

DELIVERING CONCRETE RESULTS FOR THE POOREST AND MOST VULNERABLE

Canada supports those countries where improving the health and rights of women and children is critical. In 2015-2016, Canada achieved the following results:

- In Mozambique, 19,583 more women registered as new users of modern family planning methods.
- In Afghanistan, 732,248 births were attended by skilled personnel.
- In Bangladesh, 3,935 survivors of violence received medical care and specialized psycho-social counselling.
- In Bolivia, 2,210 community health workers were better trained to manage childhood illnesses by incorporating community-based family health practices with best practices in early childhood development.
- In Haiti, 81,254 men and women in the district of Artibonite learned how to support the rights of women and the health of mothers, newborns and children.
- In Kenya, research on women in Korogocho is assessing how subsidized, enhanced quality childcare can influence a woman's ability to work and earn money.

BUILDING ON EVIDENCE AND RESULTS

Canada's accountability relies on formal evaluations to assess the relevance and performance of its assistance programs. The Formative Evaluation of Canada's Contribution to the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Initiative reported a positive assessment overall of Canada's investments from 2010-2014. However, it recommended placing greater emphasis on addressing factors that contribute to high maternal, newborn and child mortality, such as reproductive health. It also recommended balancing support for interventions that target community demand with the supply of maternal, newborn and child health services.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals have focused international attention on the lack of adequate data broken down by sex, age and diversity. These data are needed to better inform policy and program development. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS)—including births, deaths and their causes, marriages, and divorces—provide valuable information to help clarify the nature and extent of health issues and protect human rights. Building on Canada's global leadership on accountability for development results, Canada led the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The Centre works alongside the Global Financing Facility and the Every Woman Every Child movement to assist countries with weak CRVS