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**M E D I A   R E L E A S E**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Zika Virus Reaches the Caribbean Community**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, November 12, 2015.** On November 09, 2015, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) confirmed five (5) case of Zika virus in a territory of the Caribbean Community. Earlier this year, suspected cases of the mosquito-borne disease were reported in Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

Zika is a viral disease, transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is also the insect vector for Dengue and Chikungunya. The symptoms are also very similar to these diseases and include fever, muscle and joint pain, headache, nausea, and rash. There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika and symptoms last approximately four to seven days. Complications are rare and no deaths due to Zika have ever been recorded.

This is the first time Zika has been detected in a territory of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Executive Director, CARPHA, Dr. C. James Hospedales emphasized that prevention and control are fundamental in order to prevent transmission of the virus. He said "The best way to protect yourself from this disease is to avoid mosquito bites and to prevent mosquitoes breeding in and around your home environment."

In this regard, CARPHA is urging the public to inspect their homes and yards weekly, and eliminate potential mosquito breeding sites indoors and outdoors by keeping water drums and barrels tightly covered, and throwing out stagnant water from flower vases, old tyres, and other containers that might act as breeding sites.

Dr. Hospedales revealed that CARPHA will launch a mobile game called *Zap-a-'quito*, to assist in educating the public, particularly children, on the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and its potential breeding sites, at a vector-borne diseases workshop, which will hosted by CARPHA next month.

An action pictogram to aid managing your environment can also be downloaded from the CARPHA website ([http://carpha.org/Portals/0/docs/poster\\_CARPHA\\_yard.pdf](http://carpha.org/Portals/0/docs/poster_CARPHA_yard.pdf)) and used as a checklist. Members of the public can protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved clothing or long pants, using insect repellents, and sleeping under mosquito nets.

[http://carpha.org/Portals/0/docs/poster\\_CARPHA\\_yard.pdf](http://carpha.org/Portals/0/docs/poster_CARPHA_yard.pdf)

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