



## Thai MOPH urged local health authorities to investigate and implement Zika virus control measures, in a timely manner, helping limit the spread of the disease and ensuring that only low levels of disease

On 2 June, Dr. Amnuay Gajeena, Director-General of the Department of Disease Control (DDC), the Ministry of Public Health, said that according to a news report of the second Zika case in Taiwan— the case being a Thai worker, DDC had contacted the Centre for Disease Control in Taiwan to verify the report. Initially, the Thai patient had shown no symptoms and was sent to a workers' residence in Taiwan. DDC immediately sent a disease control operation team to conduct an investigation together with the local health authorities. Officials are currently conducting the case investigation. In this regard, Thailand has always been vigilantly observing and implementing Zika virus control measures as stipulated by the World Health Organization and the International Health Regulations.

The Director-General also said that Thailand already initiated surveillance, prevention and control efforts for Zika virus in 2013 after the first discovery in 2012. From then on, there have been scattered case reports. And immediately after the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that the recent cluster of microcephaly cases and other neurological disorders reported in Latin America constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), The Ministry of Public Health has stepped up its monitoring, prevention and control activities to the highest level and has issued an announcement on "Zika Virus Disease" making it mandatory to report cases of the disease in accordance with the Communicable Disease Act of 2015.

Dr. Amnuay emphasized that Thailand can currently detect the presence of the virus without having to send blood samples for analysis in the United States as before. Such capabilities improve the potential to control the disease in the country, a fact which has become evident this year with blood tests successfully identifying an increased number of people infected with the disease. In 2016, report shows that there are Zika cases in nine provinces of Thailand. Currently, seven of these provinces are under control, namely, Nonthaburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Pitsanulok, Bangkok, Sukhothai, Uttaradit and Kanchanaburi. The other two provinces, Udonthani and Buengkan, are in the process of strict disease control to ensure that the disease is closely monitored, contained and not spread to other areas in accordance with epidemiological standards,

"Development of improved diagnostic methods and monitoring of the disease have enabled us to identify infected persons more rapidly than ever before. This has enabled us to provide more effective control measures. We are now able to control Zika in a timely manner and on the spot, helping limit the spread of the disease and ensuring that only low levels of disease transmission are experienced in Thailand". said Dr. Amnuay.

Cases of Zika infections in various areas of the country need to be notified to the authorities as quickly as possible with full cooperation to ensure speedy control and prevention of any outbreaks. In areas where there are as yet no cases, people still need to protecting themselves from mosquito bites. Members of the public can all help care for their own homes and communities by practicing the triple "K" rule which is keeping containers closed or empty of water; keeping the house clean; and keeping trash in its proper place. Just small quantities of stagnant water can serve as breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes.

"The World Health Organization or WHO has classified Thailand as a country where Zika virus transmission occurs but there are no reports of complications in infants. So, Thailand is not in the same category as countries with active transmission associated with a higher incidence of microcephaly. More information can be found on the DDC website or through our hotline 1422," said Dr. Amnuay.