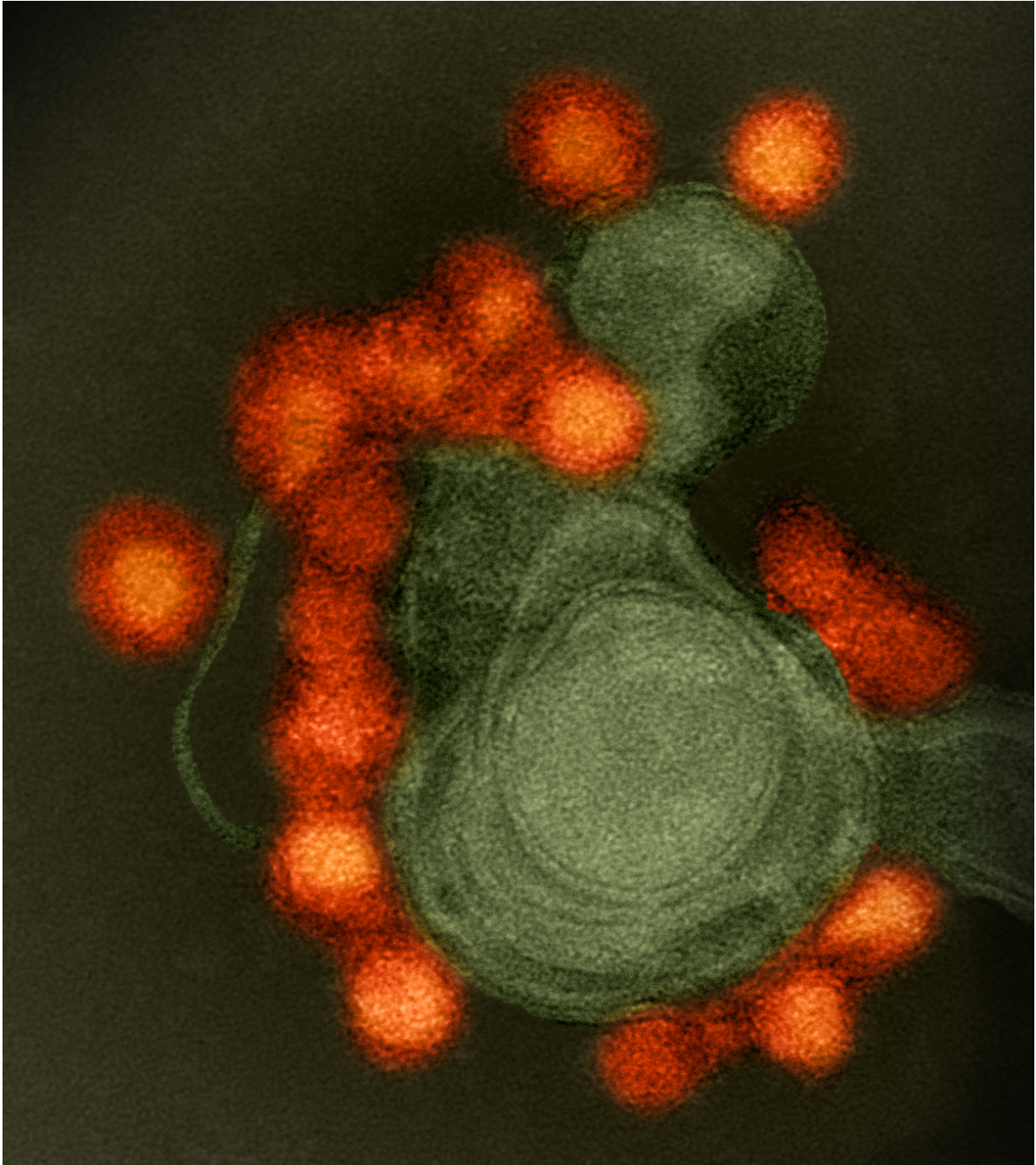


WHO says Zika response plan only 13 percent funded

May 30 2016



Transmission electron microscope image of negative-stained, Fortaleza-strain Zika virus (red), isolated from a microcephaly case in Brazil. The virus is associated with cellular membranes in the center. Credit: NIAID

The World Health Organization's Zika response programme is only 13 percent funded, "severely" compromising efforts to combat the virus that is increasingly becoming a global threat, the UN agency said Monday.

But the significant funding gaps in the \$17.7-million (15.9-million-euro) plan are not having a major impact on Brazil's efforts to keep the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro safe, WHO spokeswoman Nyka Alexander told AFP.

The UN agency last week rejected a call from 150 international doctors to change the timing or location of the Rio Games, with Brazil the country hardest hit by the Zika outbreak.

WHO said that shifting the Games would not substantially alter the risks of Zika spreading globally, but has urged athletes and visitors heading to Rio to take extra precaution against the mosquito-borne virus.

The organisation has advised women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant to stay away altogether.

The virus can cause birth defects including microcephaly in which babies are born with unusually small heads and brains, as well as a potentially fatal neurological disorder called Guillian-Barre Syndrome.

WHO has provided technical advice to Brazil's health ministry during the Zika crisis, in areas ranging from patient care to mosquito control strategies, Alexander said in an email.

But "the implementation of WHO's advice and guidance is being prioritised ... by other funding, including from the government of Brazil," so the impact of the UN budget gaps is limited with respect to the Olympics, Alexander said.

"That having been said, it is clear that WHO's ability to support the 60 countries currently affected by Zika —and to support other at-risk countries to prepare for the possible arrival of Zika—will continue to be severely compromised if we and other [health](#) partners are not sufficiently funded," she added.

Zika cases have by far been most heavily concentrated in the Americas.

The \$8.1-million virus response plan of WHO's regional office, called the Pan American Health Organization, is only 20 percent funded, the UN body said in a report.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: WHO says Zika response plan only 13 percent funded (2016, May 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-05-zika-response-percent-funded.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--