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Circular for P & I Clubs

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Zika developments in Venezuela

After an official statement of the World Health Organization (WHO) on 3rd December 2015, the presence of the Zika virus in Venezuela is a confirmed fact. Due to its environmental conditions, the high rates of reproduction of the *Aedes aegypti* –mosquito that constitutes the main disease vector to viruses like Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya– has always been an issue in the Latin American country.

Despite the international health alert issued by the WHO, the Venezuelan government has kept a low profile regarding this matter. The most recent official figures were announced during a public declaration of the Health Minister, Ms. Luisana Melo, at the end of March 2016, reporting 26,000 suspected cases of Zika, with earlier reports declaring that 319 were confirmed, as well as connecting three deaths to the virus. However, doctors of the Venezuelan Society of Public Health have estimated that the number of symptomatic cases of Zika could be anywhere between 200,000 and 500,000 with a significantly low tendency to officially reported the illness from those affected.

Venezuela's situation is aggravated by the shortage of repellents and medicines destined to treat the symptoms of the virus, as well as all diseases related to it, like the Guillain-Barré syndrome, of which Venezuela counts with 2,900 possible cases and 700 confirmed ones.

Despite the former, no mass media prevention campaigns have been launched and few fumigation operations have been performed in the country. Likewise, no specific recommendations in connection with the

virus have been issued by the aquatic authority (INEA) so far, but no doubt the fumigation is advisable, for which services are available in the country's principal ports, whose details can be found through agents and our offices if needed.

Should you need any assistance or further information regarding the topic stated above, please feel free to contact:

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