

WHO: We will overcome this crisis, the question is how large a price we will pay



The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a massive toll not just on health, but on so many parts of life.

In his opening remarks Wednesday at the media briefing on COVID-19, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom stressed that the disease has already claimed more than 16,000 lives worldwide.

'We know we will lose more. How many more will be determined by the decisions we make and the actions we take now.'

'We have overcome many pandemics and crises before. We will overcome this one too. The question is how large a price we will pay,' he said.

He commended many countries, which in an efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, have introduced unprecedented measures, at significant social and economic cost – closing schools and businesses, cancelling sporting events and asking people to stay home and stay safe.

He warned though that asking people to stay at home and shutting down population movement is buying time and reducing the pressure on health systems, but on their own, these measures are not enough to stop the spread of the pandemic.

'The point of these actions is to enable the more precise and targeted measures that are needed to stop transmission and save lives,' he said.

The WHO chief called on all countries who have introduced so-called "lockdown" measures to use this time to attack the virus.

WHO is recommending six key actions:

- First, expand, train and deploy your health care and public health workforce;
- Second, implement a system to find every suspected case at community level;
- Third, ramp up the production, capacity and availability of testing;
- Fourth, identify, adapt and equip facilities you will use to treat and isolate patients;
- Fifth, develop a clear plan and process to quarantine contacts;
- And sixth, refocus the whole of government on suppressing and controlling COVID-19.

'These measures are the best way to suppress and stop transmission, so that when restrictions are lifted, the virus doesn't re-surge, Dr. Tedros Adhanom stressed.

He emphasized that aggressive measures to find, isolate, test, treat and trace are not only the best and fastest way out of extreme social and economic restrictions, but they're also the best way to prevent them.

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