

# *World Health Organization calls for dramatic action as global coronavirus cases near 500,000*

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Geneva, March 27 (RHC)-- The director-general of the World Health Organization has urged world leaders to take strong actions to end the scourge of coronavirus sweeping the globe, as global confirmed cases approached a half a million.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "We have overcome many pandemics and crises before. We will overcome this one, too. The question is how large a price we will pay. Already we have lost more than 16,000 lives. We know we will lose more. How many more will be determined by the decisions we make and the actions we take now."

In Italy, the nation hardest hit by the pandemic, the death toll has topped 7,500. But for the fourth straight day, the pace of new coronavirus cases fell Wednesday, raising hopes that a nationwide lockdown is beginning to flatten the curve of infections.

Spain announced 738 coronavirus new deaths Wednesday, surpassing China's death toll with over 3,600 fatalities.

In China, authorities have lifted restrictions on millions of residents of Hubei province — the original epicenter of the pandemic — although the provincial capital Wuhan remains on lockdown. Chinese officials say new cases of COVID-19 have all but stopped in Hubei, but some observers question that assessment and fear a potential second wave of cases.

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