

WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic



Geneva. March 11 (RHC)-- World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has reported that, following high levels of transmission of the new coronavirus, the outbreak has been called a pandemic.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Dr. Tedros reported that the number of cases of COVID-19 in the last two weeks had increased 13-fold outside China, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, with more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries and 4,291 people killed.

"WHO has been assessing this outbreak around the clock. We are deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction. We have therefore assessed that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic," he said.

Dr. Tedros added that in the days and weeks ahead, the world can expect the number of cases, deaths, and affected countries to climb even higher, and he stressed that this is the first time a pandemic caused by a coronavirus.

"Pandemic is not a word to use lightly or carelessly. It is a word that, if misused, could cause unreasonable fear or unwarranted acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death," he noted.

The top executive of the international organization pointed out that describing the situation as a pandemic does not change WHO's assessment of the threat posed by this coronavirus nor it changes what WHO is doing.

Apart from China, most cases were detected in Italy, Iran, and South Korea. Among the European countries, France, Spain, and Germany also have registered hundreds of cases.

In Latin America, there are 34 confirmed cases in Brazil; 19 in Argentina; 17 in Chile and Ecuador; 11 in Peru; nine in Costa Rica; eight in Panama; seven in Mexico; one in the Dominican Republic; one in Paraguay, in addition to nine in Colombia.

The WHO director also indicated that the methods used by some nations to stop the spread of the disease could be adopted in other states.

"Several countries have demonstrated that this virus can be suppressed and controlled," WHO Director-General said.

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