

WHO on COVID-19: Europe has now become the epicenter of the pandemic



The World Health Organization said Friday that Europe has now become the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more reported cases and deaths than the rest of the world combined, apart from China.

“More cases are now being reported every day than were reported in China at the height of its epidemic,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told Friday’s media briefing on COVID-19.

He expressed WHO’s encouragement that many countries are now acting on the 8 pillars of WHO’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.

“Most countries now have a national plan; most are taking a multi-sectoral approach and most have laboratory testing capacity,” he said.

The WHO chief stressed that the organization’s message to countries continues to be same: “you must take a comprehensive approach. Not testing alone, not contact tracing alone, not quarantine alone, not social distancing alone do it all.”

He pointed to the experience of China, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and others, which clearly demonstrates, he said, that aggressive testing and contact tracing, combined with social distancing measures and community mobilization, can prevent infections and save lives.

On Friday, WHO, together with the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation, launched the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, to enable individuals and organizations from around the world to contribute.

WHO director-general said that up until then, WHO had relied mainly on governments to support the response. He thanked all those countries who have supported WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.

"Now everyone can contribute. Funds raised will be used to coordinate the response, to buy masks, gloves, gowns and goggles for health workers, to buy diagnostic tests, to improve surveillance, and to invest in research and development," the WHO chief said.

To give to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, go to who.int, and look for the orange "Donate" button at the top of the page.

"Every dollar donated is a dollar towards saving lives," Tedros Adhanom said and concluded: "We're all in this together."

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