

**Opening remarks
Member State briefing on COVID-19
WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland
30 April 2020**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for joining us for today's briefing.

I will keep my remarks short, so we can maximize the opportunity to hear about the experiences of countries from each of the six WHO regions.

It's now been three months since WHO declared a global health emergency over the outbreak of COVID-19.

Today, the Emergency Committee is meeting again in accordance with the International Health Regulations, to consider the evolution of the pandemic and update its advice to me.

Globally, more than 3 million cases of COVID-19 have now been reported to WHO, and more than 200,000 deaths.

Several countries are now starting to ease the stay-at-home orders they introduced.

This is an encouraging signal, but we urge all countries to proceed with extreme caution. This is the time not to relax, but for action.

At the same time, we see worrying upward trends in Africa, Central and South America, and Eastern Europe.

Make no mistake: we have a long way to go. This virus will be with us for a long time.

In the coming days, WHO will launch its second Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, which will provide an update of the resources WHO needs to support the international response and national action plans to the end of 2020.

To be clear, the second SPRP will outline WHO's needs for the international response, not the total need for countries.

Last week, WHO, together with global health actors, private sector partners and other stakeholders, launched the Access To COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, a global collaboration to speed up the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

On Monday, the 4th of May, the European Commission will host a virtual coronavirus global response summit and begin a rolling pledging campaign, to mobilize the significant resources needed to accelerate the research and development work towards protecting the world from COVID-19.

Finally, as most of you are probably aware, the Executive Board has agreed that our 73rd World Health Assembly will be something of a landmark, as the first WHA to be held virtually.

More information will be shared in the coming days.

With that, I would like to thank you all for your participation today, and I look forward to hearing from Member States about their experiences and lessons learned.

I thank you.

[392 words]