



State of Qatar Country Statement

Dr Hanan Al Kuwari, PhD

Her Excellency the Minister of Public Health

Your Excellency President of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly of World Health Organization

Your Excellency WHO Director General

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Qatar has addressed the COVID-19 threat with a whole government, whole society approach.

Continuity plans were put into action to ensure that our everyday activities, the businesses and society at large function as normally as possible during this pandemic.

In order to control the spread of the disease in the community, we activated extensive community surveillance systems to detect clusters and respond promptly with control measures. We are still in the exponential growth phase of the epidemic as we are reaching our peak. The number of cases reported is high (11600 per million population) but, as documented throughout the world this is in great part due to our intense testing policy and case finding which allows us to detect a larger fraction of positive individuals than usual. Our track and trace program is implemented by over 300 contact tracers and supported by modern electronic means: high risk contacts and suspected cases are isolated and quarantined in specific facilities.

Currently, 94 % of our positive cases are mild or asymptomatic, 5% require hospitalization and only less than 1% end up in the ICU. We have seen very few deaths among patients with COVID-19: our case fatality rate is currently 0.5 per 1000. We believe that this picture, different from that of a number of other countries, is attributable to several factors: the overall young age of our population; the active search for cases through an intense testing program (we have tested approximately 56,000 persons per million) and a very efficient and effective health care system which diagnoses and treats the most severe patients early enough to improve their course of disease and decrease complications.



To prepare our health care system to respond to the challenges posed by the epidemic, we activated our contingency plans to increase our capacity in infrastructure, manpower and resources to deal with any anticipated surge required as a result of increase in demand.

We intensified our relevant training programs and ensured that our staff have the necessary PPE for their safety.

And to ensure that all patients are taken care of and not overlooked while we are fighting COVID-19, we transformed our healthcare services; primary care, electives and particularly those for chronic diseases are assisted virtually to ensure that this vulnerable groups of the population have continuity of care.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Emir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, recognizing our responsibility towards the global community, has directed that all respective authorities and Qatar based institutions should provide all possible global support to the people and countries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, Qatar Airways has carried around a million global citizens back to their home countries as well as repatriated thousands of travelers stranded by the coronavirus aviation shutdown through charter flights. Qatar Fund for Development has also provided around 132.5 tons of medical aid to 13 countries thus far.

In this regard, we believe that universal, timely and equitable access to and fair distribution of all quality, safe, efficacious and affordable essential health technologies and products should be ensured in line with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health.

The State of Qatar has also recently co-launched – alongside South Korea, Canada, Denmark and Sierra Leone – in a virtual event at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the Group of Friends of Solidarity for Global Health Security to combat the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). We call on all countries to join us in this initiative.

Thank you, Your Excellencies