

24 February 2010

Director-General statement following the seventh meeting of the Emergency Committee

The Emergency Committee held its seventh meeting by teleconference on 23 February 2010. The Director-General sought the Committee's views on the determination of the pandemic status.

A detailed update was provided to the Committee on the global pandemic situation. After asking additional questions and reviewing the evidence and holding extensive discussion, the Committee was of the view that there was mixed evidence showing declining or low pandemic activity in many countries, but new community level transmission activity in West Africa. Moreover, they expressed concern that the winter months of the Southern Hemisphere had not yet started and there was uncertainty whether additional generalized waves of activity might occur and the need to not undermine preparations. The Committee advised that it was premature to conclude that all parts of the world have experienced peak transmission of the H1N1 pandemic influenza and that additional time and information was needed to provide expert advice on the status of the pandemic. The Committee accordingly suggested that the Committee be re-convened in a few weeks to review intervening developments and related epidemiological information.

Having considered these views, the current epidemiological evidence and other relevant information, the Director-General determined that there had been no change in the pandemic phase, and decided to continue to monitor the situation and developments closely and to convene the Committee again within the next several weeks.

The WHO Director-General asked the Committee for their views on continuance of the three current temporary IHR recommendations issued for the public health emergency of international concern. The consensus view of the Committee was in favor of continuation but to update the second recommendation by replacing "Intensify" with "Maintain" in recognition of the increased pandemic surveillance already implemented by countries and the need to maintain this activity. Having considered the views of the Emergency Committee, and the ongoing pandemic situation, the Director-General determined to continue the three temporary recommendations, as modified, namely:

- countries should not close borders or restrict international traffic and trade;
- maintain surveillance of unusual flu-like illness & severe pneumonia;
- if ill, it is prudent to delay travel.

Number of deaths attributed to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 as officially reported to WHO by States Parties to the IHR (2005) as of 14 February 2010

Region	Deaths*
WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO)	167
WHO Regional Office for the Americas (AMRO)	At least 7433
WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO)	1018
WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO)	At least 4056
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO)	1562
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (WPRO)	1685
Total*	At least 15921

* The reported number of fatal cases is an under representation of the actual numbers as many deaths are never tested or recognized as influenza related.