



World Health Organization

COVID-19 virtual press conference - 8 April, 2020

Speaker key:

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AZ	Aziz
MR	Dr Michael Ryan
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TJ Hello, everyone, and welcome to this regular press conference on COVID-19 from Geneva. We have today with us, as most of the days, Dr Tedros, WHO Director-General, Dr Mike Ryan and Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, who will help to answer your questions. Journalists will be able to ask questions by clicking on raise hand, those who are on Zoom. We have almost 400 journalists online so let's try to have one question per person and try to be brief. We will have to end this press conference by 6:30 Geneva time so I will give the floor immediately to Dr Tedros.

TAG Thank you, Tarik. Good morning, good afternoon and good evening. Tomorrow marks 100 days since WHO was notified of the first cases of pneumonia with unknown cause from China. It's incredible to reflect on how dramatically the world has changed in such a short period of time. Today I would like to give an overview of what WHO has done in the past 100 days and what we will be doing in the near future to alleviate suffering and save lives.

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On 1st January, just hours after we were notified of the first cases, WHO activated its incident management support team to co-ordinate our response at headquarters, regional and country level. On 5th January WHO officially notified all member states of this new outbreak and published; this is outbreak news on our website.

On 10th January we issued a comprehensive package of guidance to countries on how to detect, test and manage potential cases and protect health workers. On the same day we convened our strategic and technical advisory group on infectious hazards to review the situation. We have been engaging with journalists since the beginning, responding to media enquiries around the clock.

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We convened the Emergency Committee on 22nd January and again a week later after the first cases of human-to-human transmission were reported outside China and declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, our highest level of alarm. At the time there were 98 cases outside China and no deaths.

In February an international team of experts from Canada, China, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore and the United States of America visited affected provinces in China to learn more about the virus, the outbreak and the response and to glean lessons for the rest of the world.

In early February the United Nations Crisis Management Team was activated after we discussed with Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to co-ordinate the entire machinery of the UN to support countries as effectively as possible. Since then we have been working day and night in five key areas.

First we have worked to support countries in building their capacity to prepare and respond. Through WHO's network of six regional offices and 150 country offices we have worked closely with governments around the world to prepare their health systems for COVID-19 and to respond when cases arrive.

We issued a strategic preparedness and response plan which identified the major actions countries need to take and the resources needed to carry them out. Governments and partners rose to the challenge. More than US\$800 million has been pledged or received for the response. That includes more than US\$140 million from more than 229,000 individuals and organisations raised through the Solidarity Response Fund, exceeding all our expectations and showing the true solidarity globally.

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I would like to thank all donors for their support, including Apple for its contribution of US\$10 million. To ensure this money is used where it's needed most we have set up an online portal to help partners match needs with funds.

Second, we have worked with numerous partners to provide accurate information and fight the infodemic. We have published 50 pieces of technical guidance for the public, health workers and countries, providing evidence-based advice on every element of the response. We activated our global expert networks to tap the world's leading epidemiologists, clinicians, social scientists, statisticians, virologists, risk communicators and others to make our response truly global and to capture all the support we need from all over the world, from WHO experts and from other experts in many of the institutions we have globally.

Our EPI-WIN team has adapted our advice for individuals and communities, health workers, employers and workers, faith-based organisations and more about how to protect themselves and others. Through our daily situation reports and these regular press briefings we have kept the world informed about the latest data, information and evidence.

We have held regular briefings with our member states to answer their questions and learn from their experiences. We have worked with numerous media and tech companies including Facebook, Google, Instagram, LinkedIn, Messenger, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tencent, TikTok, Twitter, Viber, Whatsapp, YouTube and more to counter myth and misinformation with reliable, evidence-based advice.

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The Whatsapp chatbot now has more than 12 million followers and is available in seven languages including Hindi and Portuguese, which are launching today. The Viber chatbot has more than two million followers in three languages and four more to launch next week, reaching out to the citizens of the world, the person in the street, informing them about the latest information we have.

Just in the past two days we convened an online workshop to crowdsource ideas from over 600 experts, institutions and individuals on ways to combat the infodemic. We have worked with FIFA and some of the world's biggest sports stars to promote clean hands and physical activity and since we announced the One World:Together At Home concert with Lady Gaga and Global Citizen on Monday more TV networks and online platforms from around the world have contacted us offering to broadcast the concert. Lady Gaga had already raised US\$35 million, as already informed during our conference with her.

Third, we're working hard to ensure supplies of essential medical equipment for front-line health workers. So far we have shipped more than two million items of personal protective equipment to 133 countries and we're preparing to ship another two million items in the coming weeks. We have sent more than one million diagnostic tests to 126 countries in all regions and we are sourcing more.

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But we know much more is needed; this is not enough so we're working with the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Economic Forum and others in the private sector to ramp up the production and distribution of essential medical supplies. Today we're launching the UN COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force to dramatically scale up the supply of these life-saving tools and match supply with needs. I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, for bringing all the UN agencies to contribute to the Supply Chain Task Force.

Fourth, we're working to train and mobilise health workers. More than 1.2 million people have enrolled in six courses in 43 languages on our openwho.org platform. Our target is to train tens of millions and we have all the readiness to train tens of millions and hundreds of millions. Experts have been deployed around the world through WHO's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network and our Emergency Medical Teams platform.

Fifth, we have accelerated research and development. In early February we brought more than 400 of the world's leading researchers together to identify and accelerate research priorities. We launched the Solidarity trial with more than 90 countries globally working together to find effective therapeutics as soon as possible.

To better understand the transmission, epidemiology and clinical features of the virus we have developed research protocols that are being used in more than 40 countries in a coordinated way. We're working with FIND to accelerate development and access to diagnostics. Today 130 scientists, funders and manufacturers from around the world have signed a statement committing them to work with WHO to speed the development of a vaccine against COVID-19.

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Of course WHO is not alone, the UN is not alone. Every day we work with thousands of partners in the government, academia, the private sector, civil society and more. There are many, many other things WHO has done in the past 100 days that I haven't mentioned. These five pillars will continue to be the foundation of our work. In the coming days WHO will be releasing an updated strategy and a revised strategic preparedness and response plan with an estimate of the financial needs for the next phase of the response.

Throughout our focus has been on working with countries and with partners to bring the world together to confront this common threat together. We're especially concerned with protecting the world's poorest and most vulnerable, not just in the poorest countries but in all countries. For the past 100 days our unwavering commitment has been to serve all people of the world with equity, objectivity and neutrality and that will continue to be our sole focus in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Finally this is a special time of year for Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world. Today WHO has published practical considerations and recommendations for faith-based communities. We know that COVID-19 means billions of believers are not able to celebrate in the way they usually would but we wish everyone a safe and joyful Easter, Passover and Ramadan. Thank you.

00:14:50

TJ Thank you very much, Dr Tedros. I understand we had some technical issues with sound on some of our social media platforms so what we will try to do right now is to send as soon as possible the text of the opening remarks to everyone so you can have it while this press conference is still ongoing. It seems that journalists who are watching us on Zoom didn't have those issues so they were able to listen to us.

In any case we will have at the end of the briefing a full audio file as well but again, as I said, we will try to send immediately, right now, the opening remarks to our global media list. We will now start with questions and first we will go to John Coyne from Science.

JO Can you hear me?

TJ Yes, John. Please go ahead.

JO Thank you. This is for Director-General Tedros. I'd like to get your response to President Trump's threat yesterday to cut funding to WHO and specifically to the three complaints he had which were that WHO criticised the travel ban to China and that WHO could have called this earlier and probably did know, he said, and also that WHO was very China-centric. Could you respond to each of those?

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much. As you know, WHO has been doing all it can since the beginning and, as I said in my statement, tomorrow will be 100 days since we were notified of the outbreak. It's very tragic that we lost many, many lives.

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But from the situation we have now not only did we say we have been doing everything we can; we will continue to do everything, day and night, as we have been doing, to save lives. We don't want to waste time. Of course when you've confronted with a new virus like this one, a very dangerous virus, let alone a dangerous and serious public enemy number one like this, we do regular assessments so we will do our assessment identifying the strengths and the weaknesses and this is a tradition in WHO and we will do that. This is what we call the After Action Review.

WHO wants this more than any organisation because we want to learn from our mistakes, from our strengths and move forward. But for now the focus should be on fighting this virus. As I said earlier, this is a new virus. There are many unknowns still. When it started many people didn't know how it would behave. Still there are many unknowns and we don't know how it will behave in the future. It's very contagious, like flu, but at the same time more fatal than flu.

If you remember, that's why on February 11th we called it public enemy number one; this was 12, 13 days after we declared the global emergency. I will suggest two things to the world. Number one, at national level we should be able to work across party lines, across faiths, across other differences that we have, across ideology.

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When there is a crack at the national level between political parties, between religious groups or between other groups, that's when the virus gets a crack that it can exploit and defeat us. So number one is the national unity; working across party lines. I was a politician; I know how difficult this could be; I know it. Although it's difficult it's the right thing to do. At the end of the day the people belong to all political parties. The focus of all political parties should be to save their people.

Please don't politicise this virus. It exploits the differences you have at the national level. If you want to be exploited and if you want to have many more body-bags then you do it. If you don't want many more body-bags then you refrain from politicising it. My short message is, please quarantine politicising COVID. The unity of your country will be very important to defeat this dangerous virus.

Without unity we assure you, even any country that may have a better system will be in trouble and more crisis. That's our message; unity at national level, no politicising, no need to use COVID to score political points, no need. You have many other ways to prove

yourselves. This is not the one to use for politics. It's like playing with fire so more than ever before national unity is important if we care about our people, if we care about our citizens.

Please work across party lines, across ideology, across beliefs, across any differences for that matter. We need to behave. That's how we can defeat this virus.

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Second, global solidarity is very important. When national unity succeeds global solidarity will be easier to form. I will tell you a story. This is in the 1960s, 1967 if I am not wrong, when the eradication of smallpox was declared. I was two years old because I was born in 1965. The former USSR and United States came together and agreed to eradicate smallpox and brought the whole world together with them.

Do you remember that it was a Cold War era at that time? During the Cold War the two nations, the former USSR and the United States, came together to fight smallpox. It was killing two million people annually; 15 million infections annually. The world could not tolerate that kind of disaster and even during the Cold War the two powers agreed to fight smallpox together and brought the rest of the world together. Smallpox was eradicated in ten years from then.

Now the United States and China should come together and fight this dangerous enemy. They should come together to fight it and the rest of the G20 should come together to fight it and the rest of the world should come together to fight it. This virus is dangerous. We said it many times; it has the elements of a flu - very contagious - and it has the elements of SARS - fatal.

We will have many body-bags in front of us if we don't behave. When there are cracks at national level and global level that's when the virus succeeds. For God's sake, we have lost more than 60,000 citizens of the world. Even one person is precious, whether they're young or old. More than a million cases. What are we doing? Is this not enough? It's more than enough.

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Even the death of one person is a disaster when we can prevent it so my advice; three things. Please, unity at national level; no using COVID for political points. Then second, honest solidarity at global level and honest leadership from the US and China. Like the Cold War - we have less problems compared to the Cold War - those who have differences should join hands to fight it and then the G20 and everybody has to come together.

The third - if you agree to the two - means please quarantine politicising COVID. Quarantine politicising COVID. That's the way if we want to win. I know I didn't address your question directly. I don't think that's necessary. We shouldn't waste time pointing fingers. We need time to unite and what I am saying is not in vain. I have seen leaders who are preaching about this, many leaders for the last three months. I am just joining them and we can make it. Let's unite. Let's unite.

Unity is the only option to defeat this virus. Lack of unity; please prepare. If you don't believe in unity and don't do unity please prepare for the worst to come. The worst is yet to come if we don't rush to ensure the unity. Thank you.

TJ Thank you very much, Dr Tedros. I hope this clear message answers the question from John Coyne from Science. We will go to the next journalist; that's Michael who is a contributor to CNN. Michael, can you hear us?

MI I can hear you. Can you hear me?

00:28:55

TJ Yes. Please go ahead.

MI Thank you for taking my question. Without referencing the criticism from President Trump - you've already dealt with that - I did want to ask, Director-General, Sir; when doing so in the midst of an unprecedented global emergency, when you do get criticism from world leaders - and perhaps President Trump won't be the last - does that really create a setback for you? I think we can argue that moral suasion, your moral authority is one of the most powerful, if not most powerful, tools you have but when that is eroded does it make it more difficult to operate and save lives?

Then just very quickly, from the beginning I remember you've been advocating travel and trade restrictions and governments seem to have been ignoring that to a very big degree. Even here in Canada we now have inter-provincial restrictions so if that happens does that chip away at your moral authority? Thank you very much.

TAG I know that I am just an individual. Tedros is a dot in the whole universe. Issues targeted at me personally I don't mind. I prefer to really focus on saving lives. I've said it many times; we're losing people. Why would I care about being attacked when people are dying? Compare the two. We're losing lives every minute. Please remember more than 60,000 deaths. I'm not sure if that number is accurate. I would estimate that we have more deaths.

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Why would anyone in the right conscience [?] think about his personal attack, ignoring the bigger challenge we're facing as humanity. My focus is saving lives. We don't do politics in WHO, we don't. We care for the poor, we care for those who're vulnerable and we regret when we lose lives. That's where we should focus. I'm an individual; I am no better than anyone who is suffering from COVID.

I don't care who says what about me. I would prefer to focus on saving lives; no time to waste. How many more deaths would I like to see? I can't. Why would I worry about myself when the number of deaths is increasing? Who am I to put my personality before the deaths of all around the world?

That's why I said - maybe you have followed my Twitter messages - humility and compassion and care and a big heart for those who are suffering and for the families who have lost their loved ones. I can tell you of personal attacks that have been going on for more

than two or three months; abuses or racist comments, calling me names; black or negro. I'm proud of being black or proud of being negro because that negro is black; black is black and I'm proud; I don't care, to be honest. Thank you for asking that question.

Maybe for the first time I would make this public; even death threats. I don't give a damn because it's personally targeted to me; three months in the same situation. What makes me sad is - I said it last presser - when the whole black community was insulted, when Africa was insulted, then I don't tolerate it, then I said, people are crossing the line. When it's personal, even death threats, I didn't care, I didn't even respond.

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When as a community people start to insult us that's enough. That's enough. We cannot tolerate that but since I don't have any inferiority complex when I am personally affected or attacked by racial slurs I don't care because I'm a very proud black person or negro. I don't care even about being called negro. I am. That's what came from some quarters and if you want me to be specific, three months ago this attack came from Taiwan.

We need to be honest. I will be straight today. From Taiwan. Taiwan, the Foreign Ministry also, knew the campaign. They didn't disassociate themselves. They even started criticising me in the middle of all those insult and slurs but I didn't care; three months. I say it today because it's enough but still they can continue. I don't care because what I care about is when humanity is insulted, when we don't care when we have more than 60,000 body bags.

I care when the crosses are lined up and when the black community is insulted as a community so it's not personal. I tolerated three months and I can tolerate three years, 30 years, 300 years, no problem, if it's personal, if it's targeted to Tedros. But I assure you, we will do everything right in WHO, we will do everything that we can to serve humanity, we will do everything that will help us to have no regrets at all.

But in that process we may make mistakes, we're not angels, we are human beings so we make mistakes like other human beings. That's why I said we will do assessment, we will see our weaknesses, we will see our strengths. Let's care about each and every individual, the human beings. I will repeat again; we need national unity, unity across party lines. Let's not use this COVID to attack a party or another opponent.

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We need global solidarity. The most powerful should lead the way and please quarantine COVID politics. That's what we want. We don't care about personal attacks, we don't. We care about the life passing every single minute unnecessarily because we couldn't unite to fight this virus and because we're not understanding the power of unity to fight a common enemy.

There is a very clear line; a fight between humanity and this virus. That's it. That's what we should use to fight and win. Thank you.

TJ Thank you very much. Talking about countries that are struggling, we will go to Yemen now to hear from Aziz from Yemen National Radio. Aziz, can you hear us?

AZ Yes, I do. Hi, how are you? Thank you for taking my question. I don't know where to start but let's talk about Yemen for an instant. What's the plan there, what's going on? I've reached the envoy and it was very hard; numbers are not correct, females (unclear) are not correct. The page that sourced the information for the citizens actually is written as shopping for motorcycles so there's such a lot of effort that has been made by the WHO but it's not realistic for Yemen to have no cases at all or maybe the Yemenis have some genetics that work for this.

So can you tell me more about the plan that was implemented in Yemen and how is it around 27 million and only 600 tests are available?

00:39:03

TJ Thank you, Aziz, thank you for the question. Maybe Dr Ryan has some information about Yemen.

MR We will certainly provide more and Dr Altaf Musani is our country representative there. Altaf is a highly experienced public health leader, previously worked in Iraq and he's working very closely with Lise Grande, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator there. Yemen, as you know; and again my sympathies for the people in every part of Yemen - the population and the people of Yemen have been to hell and back in the last number of years both in terms of the destruction of health infrastructure and large outbreaks including cholera as we've seen over the last number of years.

WHO has been there with our partners and we have stood with the people of Yemen wherever they are in Yemen to provide essential health services; the provider of last resort; trauma and clinical management pathways; mobile clinics, vaccination; and now surveillance and response for COVID-19.

I'll have to check the numbers you've mentioned to me and the number of tests available. We know we have provided testing capacity and we continue to work with the Government to beef up the capacity to do isolation and to do contact tracing and quarantine of contacts. As I said, I don't have the exact details on the testing you mentioned but I will most certainly follow up with our country representative, with our regional director and get back to you on that.

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But please be assured of WHO's absolute commitment to support the health and safety and welfare of the people of Yemen.

TJ Thank you very much, Aziz, for calling from Yemen. We will now go to India; United News of India; Ajeet. Can you hear us? United News of India, Ajeet. I'm afraid we don't have... Let me try one more time.

AJ Hello.

TJ Yes, Ajeet. Can you hear us now?

AJ Yes. Can you hear me now?

TJ Yes, please go ahead. Sorry for this.

AJ My question is, is there any evidence of pets getting infected with COVID-19 and is there any guideline in queue [?] for that?

TJ Thank you very much, Ajeet. This is a question that we get quite often and we'll go to Maria to get an answer.

00:41:54

MK Thank you for the question. I first want to say I am immensely proud to be sitting up here with Dr Tedros and Dr Ryan every day and talking to you. With regard to pets, yes, we are aware of some pets being infected in households of confirmed cases. We're aware of two dogs that have been infected in Hong Kong, a cat in Belgium and we've heard recently reports of a tiger at the Bronx Zoo.

There are several groups that are conducting investigations in animals to really understand how pets are infected. It seems they are infected from their owners who are infected. There was one study that was done in Wuhan of cats which we are aware of, which was conducted before and after the outbreak and found that cats can be infected with this virus.

We're working very closely with our partner agencies at FAO and OIE to really look more in-depth at the role of pets. We don't believe that they're playing a role in transmission but we think that they may be able to be infected from an infected person and so they're not a major driver or playing a major role in transmission in the COVID-19 outbreak.

MR May I just add, it's extremely important that if people worry and have concerns about sources of transmission that we refrain from any act of cruelty to animals. They're beings in their own right and they deserve to be treated with kindness and respect and they are victims like the rest of us. So until we know more it's very important that people, as Maria said, understand that they're likely to be co-infected with us. There is no evidence at this point that they infect human beings and it's really important that we remain respectful and kind to those animals that share our lives.

00:43:51

TJ Thank you very much. There are lots of questions that will remain unanswered for today but we will definitely have other opportunities. We will conclude this press briefing here as the Director-General has another call to go to. We thank everyone for being with us today. We apologize for the technical issues.

TAG We do have some time [?].

TJ Director-General, you do have time?

TAG Yes, we have some time for this.

TJ Okay. Director-General wants to take a few more questions so can we then go to Sky, please? Do we have Deborah from Sky?

DE Yes.

TJ Please go ahead.

DE Can you hear me?

TJ Yes, Deborah. Please go ahead.

00:44:47

DE Thank you. Thank you so much for the opportunity. Director-General, obviously you've been asked quite significantly about the comments made by President Trump yesterday but could you just address the specific concern - it's not just been raised by President Trump but also by officials privately in the West, including the UK - a concern that maybe you're a bit too close to China, China supported your appointment when you ran to be Director-General and that perhaps coloured your approach, coloured your view when you were initially in the early stages responding to the crisis in Wuhan and perhaps you weren't questioning enough of the assurances being given by the Chinese authorities and their figures, their statistics; the fact that their statistics in terms - even now - of the death rates are so different to, for example, in the United States; how do you respond to that, please?

TAG Yes, thank you. Thank you so much. First of all I have a recommendation to the media. When I say we have to quarantine politicising, I have to also recognise the role of the media in some countries, adding fuel to the fire and politicising too. Please mobilise the whole world to fight against a common enemy, an invisible enemy; that's number one.

Coming to the question you said, we're close to every nation. We're colour-blind. We're wealth-blind, we don't see... for us rich and poor are the same; for us weak and strong are the same; for us small and big are the same. For us people who are in the south or in the north, east and west are the same.

00:47:03

I will tell you a story. When I appointed my Chief Nursing Officer of the whole, wide world I picked her from a country called Cook Island. Then people started criticising me and I said, what happened, what is this Cook Island, is it Thomas Cook the company or what Cook? On one hand it could be arrogance. On the other hand it could be ignorance. Ignorance could be okay; you can correct it. But I was so sad when I saw arrogance in it. The arrogance part is, people didn't want to have a Chief Nursing Officer of the whole, wide world from a small country like Cook Island, which is only 10,000; a Chief Nursing Officer.

But my belief is talent is universal, opportunity is not. You can find the most talented person from a country with a population of 11,000 like Cook Island, or 10,000. So we work with Cook Island, 10,000 population; we work with China, 1.4 billion population. We were criticised for the 10,000. Is it because Cook Island influenced us? Using what? And China, using what?

We see everybody equally. We want to see everybody equally. That's what we want, that's what we do because we belong to all member states equally. We don't want to create

differences between our member states. We would like to see all of them through a very similar principle; identical. I hope the Cook Island story will tell you loads and loads.

So we respect every nation. We work with every nation. We try to understand the problems with every nation. We try to help them understand the root cause of the challenges and help them. The most important thing is that and we see the whole world equally and I assure you of that.

00:50:06

Then I said, we will do assessments. If there is any wrongdoing you will see it. The time will come when all players check what they have done well and what they have screwed, not only WHO, all players and then build on our strengths and improve our weaknesses, focusing on the issues, focusing on the issues, issues and making this world a better world.

So the most important message now is, let's fight hard. I've said it many times; let's fight like hell to suppress and control this virus. It's dangerous. We need unity and again I remind, including the media; in even developed countries please advocate for unity and help to bring this virus to its knees. It's dangerous; let's not continue to play with fire. It's a dangerous fire like bushfire; it jumps, it grows exponentially.

There are many behaviours that are unknown to this virus still. We will have more surprises. High-income countries were surprised and we're worried about Africa now, our continent, my continent. It behaves in a way that sometimes we don't know because it's a new virus so let's bring our energy together and fight it, fight hard. With that unity, with unity and human spirit it can be defeated. Otherwise, with the way we're doing now, I think we will regret it. Thank you.

TJ We will try to have one more, obviously unless Director-General says otherwise. We will go to our friend, Bianca Gartier from Global. Bianca, can you hear us?

BI Hi, Tarik, yes. Can you hear me?

TJ Yes, Bianca. Please go ahead.

00:52:56

BI Yes, I would like to know from Dr Tedros, what would be the consequence in the case the US Government puts contributions on hold, as he promised?

TAG Sorry?

TJ The question is, what would be the consequences if the funding would stop.

TAG I think I have answered that question. Let's go above whatever specific issues you're raising. I'm asking for a bigger agenda. Let's go to a higher level. With unity, with solidarity at national level, global level, resources will not be a problem. We're asking to quarantine politicising, we're asking for genuine solidarity so what's resource? It will come from all including the US. It will.

By the way, I would like to use this opportunity to thank the US for its generous support so far. I have known the US generosity when I was a Minister in Ethiopia, Health Minister when the HIV pandemic was ravaging the world and especially Africa, when many were dying, schools closing, families losing hope, as a result, nations losing hope.

I remember then the intervention from the US, from President Bush when he started PEPFAR. That saved millions of lives, brought hope to families, brought hope to nations, brought hope to the world; not only PEPFAR but a third of global fund contributions are from the US and that goes into HIV too.

00:55:27

In the US supporting global health has been a bipartisan position. What I believe is it will continue that way because I have seen it at country level working well and at global level also working well so that's what I believe; the US will continue to contribute its share; other countries will do the same.

My experience has always been a bipartisan position and that's what I expect now but I use this opportunity to thank and appreciate the people in Government of the US for their generous support. We're very grateful for that and the world is grateful and the world is getting smaller and smaller. We need more solidarity and unity, more than ever before.

The need for solidarity has become even more important than ever before. Anything that starts in one place affects the whole world. We cannot live in our nation-state boundaries; we can't. Globalisation is a must, something we should accept, we have accepted and live with but that means interdependence and helping each other. That's what I see in the US and what I hope and believe also will continue to be the case. I thank you.

TJ Thank you, Director, General. Dr Tedros, you have a call. Obviously it's up to you but I think...

00:57:27

TAG I'll go and my colleagues can continue to have the... Or we close? Okay.

TJ I think we can close here because colleagues also have something to do so we will close this press conference with this. I think we were all inspired by powerful words from the Director-General today. We already sent you his opening remarks for those who have been watching on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms who were not able to listen. This has been sent to our global media list and we will do the same with the audio file as well as some other news from WHO offices around the world.

Thank you very much and we will inform you about the next press briefing. Have a nice evening.

00:58:14