

## COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE FOR MEMBER STATES AT WHO'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF PHASE 6

This document is designed to help Ministers of Health and other senior officials shape their public responses when WHO makes the announcement of Phase 6. These are suggested responses which can be tailored to national circumstances.

- In this context, a "pandemic" simply means that an influenza virus, new to humans, has appeared, is spreading and is causing disease in many parts of the world.
- What impact will it have in your country -- Sooner or later, we can expect to see people with the illness in this country (or more cases in this country).
- Severity (see the accompanying document on severity): Pandemics can have a range of health and social impacts. At this time, WHO assesses the severity of this pandemic to be "moderate."
- Government will be focusing on:
  - Taking care of the sick.
  - Providing guidance for people to protect themselves and their families.
  - Monitoring the outbreak
  - Working with the World Health Organization, exchanging information about the virus in this country, helping to understand how the pandemic is evolving and following developments in scientific and clinical issues.
- Some things WHO is recommending:
  - No border closure. It will not be possible to stop it at the border, port or the airport. There is no evidence that these measures stop the spread of the disease, and they may be very disruptive for international traffic and trade.
  - No restriction of travel. People who are infected with the virus and are capable of infecting others, may not show symptoms so they cannot be identified from others who are not infected.
  - Greater emphasis on providing care with a decreased emphasis on stopping the spread of the virus. Now that a pandemic has been declared, the Government will need to focus its resources on caring for those who fall ill.
- Guidance for communities, families and individuals
  - Currently, the vast majority of people who fall ill can be cared for at home and they recover without medical treatment
  - If you are caring for someone who is sick, protect yourself and others with careful hygiene (hand washing, cough etiquette).
  - Anyone who becomes ill with a fever above 100.4 F should seek medical attention
  - Get informed and, as things change, stay informed.
- Uncertainty -- Currently there is a great deal unknown about this pandemic because the disease itself is new. Health protection and care decisions will be made on the best available information; however, that may change and both health care authorities and individuals need to keep up to date and adapt their behaviour.
- Duration of the pandemic -- Based on this historical record, pandemics have lasted for years, sometimes visiting countries each flu season.