
No Country is 'Out of the Woods' Yet, WHO Cautions about Pandemic



While overall COVID-19 cases and deaths have fallen worldwide over the past few weeks, the threat from the now 18-month pandemic has not passed and the world remains in a dangerous situation, according to the director-general of the World Health Organization.

"No country should assume it is out of the woods, no matter its vaccination rate," Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during his opening remarks at the World Health Assembly on May 25th.

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The pandemic is not over, and will not be over, Dr. Tedros cautioned, until virus transmission is controlled in every country in the world. As long as the virus continues to spread, he said, the greater chance there is for new variants to emerge. "So far, no variants have emerged that significantly undermine the efficacy of vaccines, diagnostics or therapeutics," Dr. Tedros said. "But there is no guarantee that will remain the case."

Vaccinations also are an area of concern for the director-general. With more than 75 percent of all COVID-19 vaccines being administered by just 10 countries, he called for a more equitable distribution of vaccines globally. "There is no diplomatic way to say it: A small group of countries that make and buy the majority of the world's vaccines control the fate of the rest of the world," he said.

Dr. Tedros called on Member States to support a push to vaccinate at least 10 percent of the population of every country by September, and a "drive to December" to achieve the WHO goal of vaccinating at least 30 percent by the end of the year. "This is crucial to stop severe disease and death, keep our health workers safe and reopen our societies and economies," he said.

He urged all countries to do more to combat the virus by doing the following:

- Increase surveillance, testing, sequencing, and sharing information;
- Surge supplies needed to protect health workers;
- Fight misinformation and disinformation;
- Empower people and communities to play their part;
- Support businesses and workplaces to take steps to open up safely, where appropriate;
- Implement national vaccination strategies, vaccinate those most at risk, and donate vaccines to COVAX.

Further COVID-19 Statistics and resources are available on the [WHO Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#).

Source: [WHO](#)

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