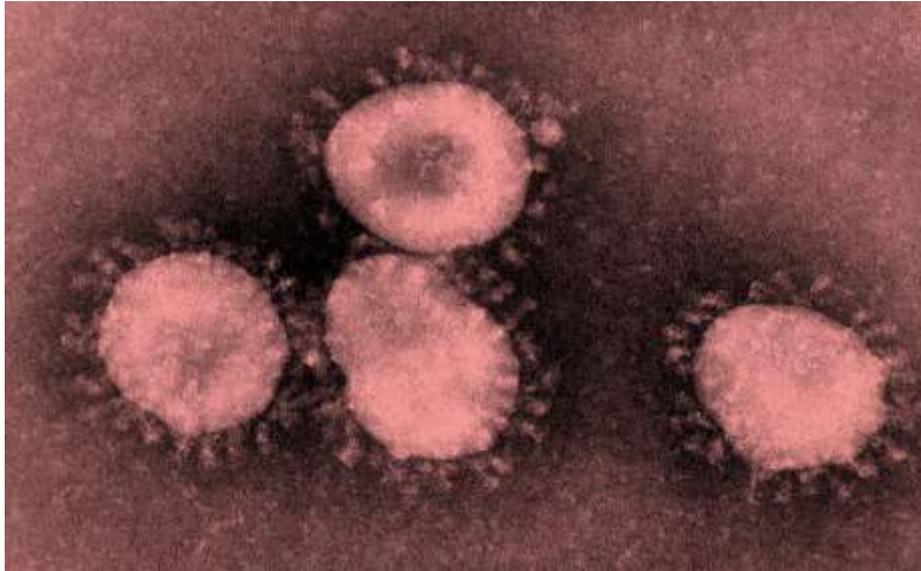


# WHO announces COVID-19 pandemic



**Geneva, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020** - World Health Organization's Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared that the COVID-19 disease can be characterized as a pandemic. "This is due to the rapid increase in the number of cases outside China over the past 2 weeks that has affected a growing number of countries", he added.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus, a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans, first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan, in December 2019. Throughout January 2020, the number of cases in China increased significantly. After reaching other countries and based on its confirmed human-to-human transmission, the WHO declared the coronavirus spread a public health emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 surpassed 100,000, affecting over 100 countries. Given escalating outbreaks and sharp increases in other countries, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Since, measures of containment have been taken around the globe to decrease and delay viral transmission so that healthcare systems can cope with the surge.

The vaccine industry is fully committed to accelerate efforts in research and development to respond as quickly as possible to the needs of populations everywhere. DCVMN recognizes the pandemic and the global health response that is required. During this global emergency it is important to ensure that all vaccines for routine immunization are supplied and administered without any delays due to border control, travel and transportation restrictions. Our network is assessing this situation to ensure that there is minimal impact on vaccine supplies.

The Network is committed to helping governments around the world to build strong healthcare systems based on disease prevention and to enable care for the most vulnerable in society. Several companies affiliated to the Network are on the forefront of the research on vaccines against COVID19 and have initiated programs to develop COVID 19 vaccines; the results of these development programs will be available in the months to come.

More information at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>