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WHO Sets 6 Conditions For Ending A Coronavirus Lockdown

By Bill Chappell

NPR.org, April 15, 2020 · For the billions of people now living under some form of stay-at-home or lockdown orders, experts from the World Health Organization have new **_(1)_**: We should be ready to "change our behaviors for the foreseeable future," they say, as the agency updates its advice on when to lift COVID-19 lockdown orders.

The question of when to ease shutdowns is a hot topic, as economic output is **_(2)_** in many countries — including the U.S., now the epicenter of the global pandemic.

"One of the main things we've learned in the past months about COVID-19 is that the faster all cases are found, tested, isolated & cared for, the harder we make it for the virus to spread," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus via Twitter as the guideline was released: "This principle will save lives & mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic."

The coronavirus has killed tens of thousands of people. It has also reshaped society and disrupted **_(3)_** life for people around the world – including 1.4 billion children whose educations are now **_(4)_** by shutdowns, WHO says. The pandemic has triggered massive losses for big companies and small businesses, and forced millions of people out of work.

While full national lockdowns remain **_(5)_**, at least 82 countries have some form of lockdown in place, according to UNICEF.

The global economy is now predicted to **_(6)_** by 3% this year, the International Monetary Fund says in its most recent analysis. That includes a contraction of nearly 6% for the U.S. economy.

Despite all the personal and economic pain the coronavirus has caused, WHO officials say that in many places, it's too soon to get back to normal. And because any premature attempts to restart economies could trigger secondary peaks in COVID-19 cases, they warn that the process must be deliberate and widely coordinated.

"You can't replace lockdown with nothing," Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of WHO's emergencies program, said at a recent **_(7)_**. Stressing the importance of a well-informed and committed population, he added, "We are going to have to change our behaviors for the foreseeable future."

Any government that wants to start lifting restrictions, said Tedros of WHO, must first **_(8)_** six conditions:

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