**Trump announces US will halt funding to World Health Organization over coronavirus response**

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President Trump announced at the White House coronavirus press briefing on Tuesday that the United States will immediately halt all funding for the World Health Organization (WHO), saying it had put "political correctness over lifesaving measures."

Also at the briefing, the president said plans to ease the national economic shutdown were being finalized, and that he would be "authorizing governors to reopen their states to reopen as they see fit."

In the meantime, Trump declared that the United States would undertake a review into why the WHO had caused "so much death" by "severely mismanaging and covering up" the coronavirus' spread.

The United States is the WHO's largest single donor, and the State Department had previously planned to provide the agency $893 million in the current two-year funding period.

"We have deep concerns over whether America's generosity has been put to the best use possible," Trump said, accusing the WHO of failing to adequately keep the international community apprised of the threat of the coronavirus.

"The WHO failed in this duty, and must be held accountable," Trump said. He added that the WHO had ignored "credible information" in December 2019 that the virus could be transmitted from human to human.

As early as late December, Wuhan medical staff were suspected to have contracted the disease, indicating likely human-to-human transmissibility.

On January 4, in a statement first flagged by The National Review, the head University of Hong Kong’s Centre for Infection warned that “the city should implement the strictest possible monitoring system for a mystery new viral pneumonia that has infected dozens of people on the mainland, as it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human."

The Chinese government also began suppressing news about the virus. Nevertheless, on January 8, the WHO declared: “Preliminary identification of a novel virus in a short period of time is a notable achievement and demonstrates China’s increased capacity to manage new outbreaks."

Again on January 14, the WHO simply echoed Chinese government statements: “Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in Wuhan, China.”

By January 19, the WHO had changed its tune. “Not enough is known to draw definitive conclusions about how it is transmitted, the clinical features of the disease, the extent to which it has spread, or its source, which remains unknown."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease expert in the U.S. and a key member of Trump's coronavirus task force, has said misinformation from China, repeated by the WHO, had affected U.S. response efforts.

Several media organizations had also uncritically cited WHO's assurances about the coronavirus.

The Washington Post even ran a story quoting a Chinese official asking for "empathy" and slamming the White House for acting "in disregard of the WHO recommendation against travel restrictions."

Former Vice President Joe Biden, just hours after Trump announced travel restrictions on China on Jan. 31, criticized the president's "hysterical xenophobia."

In March, The Post finally acknowledged that critics accused China and WHO of "covering up or downplaying the severity of an infectious disease outbreak."