The World Health Organization(WHO) has noted with concern the circulation of inaccurate information and statements regarding pandemic (H1N1) that are wrongly attributed to Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia.

WHO would like to clarify its firm and longstanding position regarding pandemic (H1N1). Following is the accurate statement by Dr Samlee Plianbangchang.

"The world is going through a real pandemic. This current influenza pandemic is a scientifically well-documented event in which the emergence and spread of a new influenza virus has caused unusual patterns of disease throughout the world.

The new virus has led to patterns of death and illness not normally seen in influenza infections. Most of the deaths caused by the pandemic influenza have occurred among younger people, including those who were otherwise healthy. Pregnant women, younger children and people of any age with certain chronic lung or other medical conditions appear to be at higher risk of more complicated or severe illness. Many of the severe cases have been due to viral pneumonia, which is harder to treat than bacterial pneumonias usually associated with seasonal influenza. Many of these patients have required intensive care.

Any suggestion that the pandemic is an 'exaggeration' is to ignore recent history and science

and to trivialize the deaths of over 17 000 people and the many additional serious illnesses experienced by others."

WHO would like to reiterate that its official statements can only be obtained through its official websites or by directly contacting its headquarters and regional offices.

www.who.int

www.emro.int

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