

WHO showers accolades on Mexico, warns swine flu is unstoppable

by Jamie Anderson

Mexico, July 3: Day one of the two-day summit in Cancun, Mexico, where the meeting of global health officials is being held, saw World Health Organization Director Dr. Margaret Chan cautioning that the spread of the dreaded H1N1 virus cannot be halted, making travel restrictions to affected countries meaningless.

"Recommendations to avoid travel to Mexico, or to any other country or area with confirmed cases, serve no purpose. They do not protect the public. They do not contain the outbreak. And they do not prevent further international spread," Said Chan.

Prompt swine flu response by Mexico

Mexico, the epicenter of the current swine flu epidemic, attracted all the praise because of its vigorous and timely response to the flu.

"Mexico gave the world an early warning, and it also gave the world a model of rapid and transparent reporting, aggressive control measures, and generous sharing of data and samples," Chan acknowledged.

The effort put in by Mexico delayed the initial spread of the virus. This provided an opportunity to the other nations to gear up and combat the influenza.

Back home, the going was not easy for the Mexican President Felipe Calderon who had to face stubborn officials wanting to hide the real numbers for fear it would cause panic.

"For many people across the world, Mexico was demonized precisely because it was providing truthful information," Calderon said.

The widespread menace

Chan noted that with over 100 countries reporting cases of the flu, the virus is virtually unstoppable.

More than 90,000 people have already been affected by the nasty swine flu. The lethal flu is also to be blamed for 382 deaths globally.

Argentina, Australia and Chile have been severely hit by the influenza in recent weeks. Argentina has reported 26 deaths from the virus, while Australia and Chile have reported nine deaths and two deaths respectively.

The United States has been worst hit with close 34,000 confirmed cases of the flu. 170 people have lost their lives in the country due to the virus.

<http://www.themoneytimes.com/featured/20090704/who-showers-accolades-mexico-warns-swine-flu-unstoppable-id-1075283.html>