



# POSITIVE POLITENESS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC OF COVID-19 SPEECHES: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

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<b>Received:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2022 <b>Published:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	The present study aims at analyzing politeness in Arabic and English in the genre of Covid-19 speeches. More adequately, it comparatively highlights the positive politeness strategies that are used in English and Arabic speeches that are related to Covid-19. The theoretical background of politeness and its related concepts about the two languages will be presented. Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of positive politeness strategies will be adopted to analyzing the data in question. The main findings of the present study are the strategy of exaggeration is mostly used by the speeches while the strategy of finding common ground is less used in both languages. It is concluded that the strategy of exaggeration is the appropriate one in comparison with the other strategies when talking about Covid-19 matters.

**Keywords:** Politeness, positive politeness strategies and positive and negative face.

## 1. 1 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of politeness is likely to be found in all cultures. There is a plethora of literature about this phenomenon which makes it difficult to classify and define. As such, when individuals employ a kind of behavior (linguistic or non-linguistic) so as to avoid rudeness or threat, the phenomenon of politeness is achieved (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 58). Besides, Yule (1996: 51) mentions that it is the consideration and awareness that must be shown when performing a polite behavior.

The concept of face is the most prominent in linguistic politeness since everybody wants to save it and become accepted in society (Yule, 2010: 135). The concept of face is divided into positive and negative. While 'the need for enhancement of positive self-image' in positive face, 'the need for freedom of action' in negative face. As such, Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) propose certain positive politeness strategies to avoid the threatening behavior. In other words, individuals' launching a polite behavior is to mitigate the possible threat to others' face in an interaction.

The present study comparatively aims at showing the ways through which the Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies are presented in English and Arabic with reference to Covid-19 speeches.

Hence, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What does politeness mean in English and Arabic and how it is achieved?
2. What are the most used positive politeness strategies in both Arabic and English Covid-19 Speeches?

## 1. 2 Aims

1. Identifying the meaning of politeness in English and Arabic and showing how it is achieved?
2. Investigating the most used positive politeness strategy in both Arabic and English Covid-19 Speeches.

## 1. 3 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. Politeness is the kind of linguistic and non-linguistic behavior whereby individuals employ when they lessen the possible threat to others' self-image in a society. It is achieved via using certain strategies which are called positive politeness strategies.
2. The strategy of exaggeration is the most frequent strategy that is used in the Arabic and English Covid-19 Speeches.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Politeness in English

Historically speaking, the origin of the concept of politeness is taken from the Late Medieval Latin of the word 'politus' which refers to being 'smooth' or 'polish'(Klein, 1994: 3).

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the concept of politeness is defined as 'having or showing behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people'.

Besides, Cutting (2002: 51) highlights that polite act is launched when a speaker tactfully, indirectly and deferently behaves with regard to certain situation in a context. Additionally, it is the harmony and showing consideration for others is what polite people aims at.

For Brown and Levinson (1987: 65), politeness indicates the successful strategy that enables 'potentially aggressive' speakers to initiate an interaction. In the same fashion, Wildeblood and Brinson (1965: 44), Holmes (1995:5) and Yule (1996:60) underscore that being polite means showing 'good manners' or 'courtesy', 'expressing respect', 'avoiding offends' and 'showing consideration' for those who you are initiating a conversation with.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 66), the term of 'face' is regarded as the central topic in linguistic politeness. In this regard, Yule (1996: mentions that the term of face refers to the 'public self-image of a person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize'

The term of 'face', as Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) assert, is defined as 'the public self-image that every member [of society] wants to claim for himself'. As such, face is classified as consisting of two related perspectives, namely, the positive face and negative face. These two perspectives of face lead to the same aim, that is, 'we want people like us'. In this regard, O'keeffe' et al. (2011: 63-64) add that what positive face means is that individuals aim at getting accepted, liked and being part of group in a community. However, negative face means that individuals aim at being independent, and free from others' imposition.

Further, Yule (2010: 135) states that there are possibly two acts, namely face threatening act and face saving act. Face threatening act is observed when speakers employ a direct speech act such as 'Give me that paper!' so as to make others achieve their wants, and, thus threatening others' 'self-image' is represented. On the contrary, face saving act is observed when speakers use an indirect speech act such as 'Could you pass me that paper?'. In doing so, the assumption of threatening others' 'self-image' is decreased.

## 2. 2 Politeness in Arabic

The word 'Mujamilih' is used to describe the kind of action in which superior and inferior people are considered during interactions. Hence, this deferent action is bound to culture, that is, considering others' face is mutually understood in cultures (حسان , 2006: 343). In this regard, Cortazzi (1993: 17) mentions that deferential behaviours are closely similar to the employment of polite notions of 'compliments', 'propriety' and 'correctness'.

Furthermore, حسان (ibid: 246) adds that there are three interactional principles are required so as to have a successful polite behavior:

1. Perception of social ethic principle (i.e., employing expressions such as 'البيت' or 'ام الاولاد' to denote the traditions of Arabic culture.
2. Perception of individual ethic principle (i.e., using plural expressions rather than the singular expressions)
3. Perception of specific arena of activity principle (i.e., using the honorific expressions).

Like English, Arabic exposes similar behaviours with regard to the employment of imperative constructions. As such, speakers are considered as rude or impolite when they use direct orders. Avoiding such rude tendencies, it is speakers' role to employ expressions that mitigate or lessen the possible threat such as (الله يخليك), (الله يرضى عنك) and (عافاك) (with ellipsis of "God") (Alaoui, 2001: 12).

In addition, it is stated that a lot of strategies that are used in Arabic through which the polite behaviour is achieved. Hence, euphemism is one these strategies that are used for the sake of lessening the negative meaning of some words in the language (Haddad, 2009: 50). Among those expressions come:

انتقل الى الرفيق الاعلى, انتقل الى رحمة ربه, لبي نداء ربه  
اسلم الروح, سلم امانته, انتقل الى الدار الآخرة  
التأمين على الحياة (نيابة عن التأمين عند الموت)  
زوجة المرحوم (نيابة عن أرملة المرحوم)  
لكم طول البقاء (نيابة عن جنبكم الله الموت) Haddad (2009: 50-52)

## 2. 3 The Model

The present study is limited to adopt Brown and Levinson's (1987:103) model of positive politeness strategies in analyzing the selected data. The reason behind adopting this model because it is applicable to analyzing the data in both English and Arabic. The strategies are listed as follows:

- Pay attention to a hearer's interests, wants, needs or goods.
- Exaggerate interest in, approval of or sympathy with a hearer.
- Employ exaggeration and dramatic effect in your speech in order to interest and involve the hearer.
- Use in-group identity markers.
- Seek agreement/make small talk.
- Avoid disagreement.
- Find common ground.
- Joke.
- Assert or imply knowledge of and concern for a hearer's wants.
- Offer, promise.
- Be optimistic.

- Use inclusive 'we' forms.
- Give (or ask for) reasons.
- Assume or assert reciprocity.
- Give gifts.

### 3. 0 DATA ANALYSIS

#### 3. 1 Data Description

The Arabic and English data of the present study is taken from the websites (see appendixes) in written format. It talks about the emergence of Covid-19 and the role of World Health Organizations in facing the vital spread of the virus and the appropriate personal and protocols as well. The data in question is regarded as a fertile ground to be analyzed in accordance with Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies.

#### 3. 2 Methodology

The data of the present study will be analyzed descriptively via using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of positive politeness strategies.

##### 3. 2. 1 Analyses of English Data

(WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the Member State Information Session on the Omicron variant of SARS-Cov-2/ 30 November, 2021)

Extract 1.

*Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends, The emergence of the Omicron variant has understandably captured global attention. The emergence of any new variant should capture our attention, especially one as highly mutated as Omicron.*

*(web 1)*

In extract 2, the speaker employs the politeness strategies of employ exaggeration and dramatic effect in his speech and be optimistic. The first strategy is represented when the doctor tells the addressees that Omicron, the new variant, gets the world attention since it could be vital as the ones that precedes Omicron. The second strategy is represented when the doctor aims that the addressees should be optimistic since the condition of Omicron is under control though its high spread.

Extract 2.

*The WHO Secretariat takes this development extremely seriously, and so should all Member States. But we should not be surprised. This is what viruses do. (ibid)*

Three positive politeness strategies are employed in this extract. The strategy of imply knowledge of concern for the addressees wants through telling them that all the health systems take the development of the virus under serious and scientific considerations. The strategy of inclusive we is also used when the addresser employs the plural pronoun 'we' to include and inform all people about the behavior of the virus and its seriousness.

Extract 3.

*The Secretariat is working with partners all over the world to fill in our knowledge gaps as quickly as possible.*

The positive politeness strategy of promise is achieved in extract 4. due to the speaker's statement that the personal are working to find solutions and information about the new variant as fast as possible. (ibid)

Extract 4.

*Once again, I thank Botswana and South Africa for detecting, sequencing and reporting this variant so rapidly. (ibid)*

In this extract, the doctor declares his gratitude for Botswana and South Africa since they succeed in detect, sequence and inform the world about the emergence of Omicron. In doing so, the addresser exploits the positive politeness strategy of exaggerate interest in what these two countries have achieved. Put it differently, the speaker thankfully announces their right protocols and procedures in discovering the new variant.

Extract 5.

*We call on all Member States to take rational, proportional risk-reduction measures, in keeping with the International Health Regulations. (ibid)*

The positive politeness strategy of be optimistic is fulfilled when the doctor mentions that the systematic and rational measures are taken by the all personal of the International Health, as illustrated in extract 5. Adopting this strategy sends the message to people that there is no need to be panic since all the appropriate precautions and protocols of the International Health are followed.

Extract 6.

*We continue to call on all Member States to optimize public health and social measures and ensure that high-risk and vulnerable individuals in all countries are fully vaccinated immediately. (ibid)*

In extract 6., three positive politeness strategy are used, namely; the inclusive 'we', promise and be optimistic. The plural pronoun 'we' is used to represent the first strategy though which the speaker aims at including all the medical personal so as to prioritize the public health and social measures and make sure that all countries get vaccinated. The strategy of promise takes place when promising people that all intense matters are polarized and under consideration. Finally, the strategy of be optimistic is achieved due to the implied message that reads people should be calm and hopeful because their lives are in safe hands.

Extract 7.

*At the same time, we must not forget that we are already dealing with a highly transmissible, dangerous variant – the Delta variant, which accounts for almost all cases globally. We need to use the tools we already have to prevent transmission and save lives from Delta. And if we do that, we will also prevent transmission and save lives from Omicron – so enhancing surveillance, testing, sequencing and reporting. (ibid)*

Employing exaggeration, the inclusive 'we', promise and be optimistic are the fourth politeness strategies that are employed in extract 7. The dangers and intense spread is exemplified by the strategy of exaggeration. Using the inclusive 'we' remind all people of the dangers of Omicron so as to achieve the strategy of inclusive we. Promising and calming people about the transmissions of the virus and the precautions and protocols of the health personal so as to fulfill the strategies of promise and be optimistic.

### **3. 2. 2 Analyses of Arabic Data**

WHO Director-General's opening remarks in the meeting with the Arabic Group Ambassador/ March 3, 2022).

Extract 1.

أصحاب السعادة، أيها الزملاء والأصدقاء الأعزاء،  
السلام عليكم وصباح الخير،

(web 2) أولاً وقبل كل شيء، أود أن أشكر سعادة السفير زبير على تنظيمه اجتماع اليوم.

In extract 1., the speaker employs the positive politeness strategy of making small talk. Launching this strategy is considered a polite behavior in Arabic cultures so as to break the ice of interactions in the form of greeting and welcoming others.

Extract 2.

تتمثل الأولوية الأولى في دعم جميع البلدان في التعجيل بإحداث تحول صوب تعزيز أنماط العيش الصحية والرفاهية، والوقاية من الأمراض بمعالجة أسبابها الجذرية. (ibid)

Achieving the positive politeness strategy of assert or imply knowledge of and concern for a hearer's wants requires the speaker to utilize all the speech that show concern about people's wants and requirements to live luxurious life and get protected from all the future viruses, as seen in extract 2.

Extract 3.

ويمكن لهذا التحول أن يخفف العبء العالمي للمرض بمقدار النصف، وأن يتيح تحقيق مكاسب اقتصادية هائلة تتمثل في تخفيف العبء الملقى على كاهل النظم الصحية وزيادة إنتاجية السكان.

ويرتبط هذا بشكل وثيق بأولويتي الثانية المتمثلة في إعادة توجيه النظم الصحية صوب الرعاية الصحية الأولية، باعتبارها أساس التغطية الصحية الشاملة. (ibid)

The addresser aims at reflecting that it is important to re-direct the health system toward the basic health care via regarding it as the global health coverage, and hence. Accordingly, the strategy of offer and promise is fulfilled in extract 3.

Extract 4.

بعد عقود من التقدم، أدت جائحة كوفيد-19 إلى تأخر أو تراجع جميع المؤشرات الصحية تقريباً. وفي الوقت نفسه، يقع ملايين الأشخاص مجدداً في براثن الفقر بسبب النفقات الصحية التي يدفعونها من أموالهم الخاصة.

فيجب أن نعمل معاً على إرساء نظم متينة للرعاية الصحية الأولية من أجل الكشف عن الفاشيات في أقرب وقت ممكن، فضلاً عن الوقاية من الأمراض وتعزيز الصحة على مستوى المجتمع المحلي. (ibid)

In extract 4., the addresser uses the positive politeness strategy of promise when he states that the health organizations are working to discover the behaviours of the new virus as fast as possible. Besides, the strategy of employ exaggeration and dramatic effect in his speech so as to get the addressees interest and attention as well. Using these two positive strategies lead to the emergence of a third strategy, that is, be optimistic which means that everything is under control and people do not have to worry about since the health organizations prioritize the new behavior of Omicron.

Extract 5.

ثالثاً، يجب أن نعمل معاً على تعزيز الهيكل الصحي العالمي للوقاية من الجوائح والتأهب والاستجابة لها. ويعني ذلك تعزيز الحوكمة والقيادة، وزيادة التمويل، وتقوية النظم والأدوات، بالاستناد إلى مبادئ الإنصاف والشمول والتضامن. واستجابةً لقرار اتخذ في الدورة الاستثنائية التاريخية لجمعية الصحة العالمية، اجتمعت هيئة التفاوض الحكومية الدولية خلال الأسبوع الماضي بغرض بدء العمل على اتفاق دولي يرمي إلى تعزيز الوقاية من الجوائح والتأهب والاستجابة لها. وتكتسي مشاركة بلدانكم في هذه العملية أهمية بالغة. فالعالم بحاجة إلى الاستماع إلى آراء جميع البلدان، بما فيها البلدان العربية، والتي لديها خبرة واسعة في مواجهة الطوارئ الصحية. (ibid)

It is the positive strategies of find common ground and exaggerate interest in that are used in extract 5. by the speaker. By the former strategy is meant that the speaker aims at build a strong and consensus ground that every person agrees with, with regard to the healthy protocols and precautions. Besides, it is also achieved when the speaker mentions that Arabs are experienced in dealing with hard difficulties and health emergencies. By the latter strategy is meant that getting addressees attention requires the speaker to exaggerate or overstatement with reference to the new protocols, enforcement of viruses and facing the health hard conditions.

Extract 6.

كما تعمل أمانة المنظمة مع الدول الأعضاء على إنشاء مبادرات جديدة في سبيل تعزيز التأهب على الصعيدين الوطني والعالمي، بما فيها مركز منظمة الصحة العالمية لتحليل المعلومات عن الجوائح والأوبئة، ونظام مركز السلامة الحيوية التابع لمنظمة الصحة العالمية، والاستعراض الشامل للصحة والتأهب. (ibid)

What is intended to be said in extract 6. by the speaker is that the health organizations promise and guarantee that they work to enhance their health system on the national and international perspectives so as to study, examine, and be ready to any urgent and emergency conditions that are related to the virus behaviors.

Extract 7.

لم يسبق أن توفرت لدى أي جيل عبر التاريخ أدوات أقوى من تلك المتوفرة لدينا لتعزيز الصحة والوقاية من الأمراض، وتوفير منتجات وخدمات صحية مبتكرة، والتأهب للفاشيات والأوبئة والوقاية منها والكشف عنها والاستجابة لها بسرعة. (ibid)

Extract 7. illustrates that the speaker employs the positive politeness strategy of exaggeration and in order to attain their interest and make them involved with reference to boost the health organizations and systems so as to be able to face viruses and diseases and respond to such emergencies as fast as possible. In addition, the strategy of be optimistic is also observed in extract 7 since the speaker intends to send a positive message to the addressees that all the health systems and organizations and personals as well are prepared to fight any urgent condition.

Extract 8.

وتتمثل مهمتنا، في نهاية المطاف، في إحداث أثر ملموس في حياة الأشخاص الذين نخدمهم.

شكراً لكم. شكراً. (ibid)

The strategy of inclusive 'we' is used in extract 8. when the speaker tells the addressees that our duty is depicted the moment we make positive reaction and difference in the lives of people whom we serve. Thanks and gratitude expressions are used to reflect an agreed-upon speech that has been held and the required message has been delivered. Thus, the strategy of make small talk is achieved.

### 3.3 Findings

According to the data of the current study , some of the positive politeness strategies appear to be utilized frequently in both English and Arabic . The following comparison between positive politeness in English and Arabic in the speeches of covid-19 can be drawn:

#### 3.3.1 The Similarities

The similarities between positive politeness in English and Arabic in the speeches of covid-19 include the following :

- 1- There is a higher employment of the strategy of exaggeration in both Arabic and English.
- 2- The strategy of be optimistic is also prioritized by the speakers in both Arabic and English data
- 3- The strategies of find a common ground and imply knowledge and show concern are less used in both English and Arabic data.

#### 3.3.2 The Differences

The differences between positive politeness in English and Arabic in the speeches of covid-19 include the following :

- 1- The strategy of the inclusive 'we' is found to be employed in English more than Arabic.
- 2- The strategy of making small talk in the form of greeting and thanking is found to be highly employed in Arabic than English.
- 3- The strategy of offer and promise is found to be approximately employed in English than Arabic.

## 4. 1 CONCLUSIONS

The present study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Politeness is defined as being a universal phenomenon (i.e., found in all languages) whereby the speakers try to mitigate any possible threat or rude behavior (linguistically or non-linguistically). Hence, the first hypothesis is achieved. In doing so, speakers employ certain strategies which are called the positive politeness strategies.
2. As for the positive politeness strategies, it is found that:
  - a. The higher employment of the strategy of exaggeration in both Arabic and English as well. The reason behind this employment is to attain the addressees interest with regard to the healthy precautions, protocols that will save people's life across the world. Thus, the second hypothesis is achieved.
  - b. The strategy of be optimistic is also prioritized by the speakers in both Arabic and English data. It is the positive message that makes the speakers to exploit this strategy. That is, the addresser aims at sending a positive message to the addressees that all the healthy organizations and systems are prepared to face any dangerous disease.
  - c. The strategy of the inclusive 'we' is found to be employed in English more than Arabic with reference to the selected data. The employment of this strategy means that the speaker wants to include the addressees as being part of the solutions to overcome the current pandemic.
  - d. The strategy of offer and promise is found to be approximately employed in English than Arabic. Promising and offering is techniques used to make the addressees believe in the protocols and regulations of the health systems and their staff as well.
  - e. The strategy of making small talk in the form of greeting and thanking is found to be highly employed in Arabic than English in order to thank and welcome those who have participated in the success of the development of any health procedures.
  - f. The strategies of find a common ground and imply knowledge and show concern are less used in both English and Arabic data. However, other strategies are not used in both Arabic and English.

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#### Appendices

i)

2022 الكلمة الافتتاحية التي أدلى بها المدير العام للمنظمة في الاجتماع مع سفير المجموعة العربية في 3 آذار/ مارس 2022

أصحاب السعادة، أيها الزملاء والأصدقاء الأعزاء،  
السلام عليكم وصباح الخير،

أولاً وقبل كل شيء، أود أن أشكر سعادة السفير زبير على تنظيمه اجتماع اليوم

وبناءً على طلبكم، سنركز اليوم على أولوياتي للسنوات الخمس المقبلة، والتي حددتها في اجتماع المجلس التنفيذي المعقود في كانون الثاني/يناير.

دعوني أعرضها عليكم واحدة بواحدة:

تتمثل الأولوية الأولى في دعم جميع البلدان في التعجيل بإحداث تحول صوب تعزيز أنماط العيش الصحية والرفاهية، والوقاية من الأمراض بمعالجة أسبابها الجذرية

ويمكن لهذا التحول أن يخفف العبء العالمي للمرض بمقدار النصف، وأن يتيح تحقيق مكاسب اقتصادية هائلة تتمثل في تخفيف العبء الملقى على كاهل النظم الصحية وزيادة إنتاجية السكان

ويرتبط هذا بشكل وثيق بأولويتي الثانية المتمثلة في إعادة توجيه النظم الصحية صوب الرعاية الصحية الأولية، باعتبارها أساس

التغطية الصحية الشاملة.

بعد عقود من التقدم، أدت جائحة كوفيد-19 إلى تأخر أو تراجع جميع المؤشرات الصحية تقريباً.

وفي الوقت نفسه، يقع ملايين الأشخاص مجدداً في براثن الفقر بسبب النفقات الصحية التي يدفعونها من أموالهم الخاصة.

فيجب أن نعمل معاً على إرساء نظم متينة للرعاية الصحية الأولية من أجل الكشف عن الفاشيات في أقرب وقت ممكن، فضلاً عن الوقاية من الأمراض وتعزيز الصحة على مستوى المجتمع المحلي.

ثالثاً، يجب أن نعمل معاً على تعزيز الهيكل الصحي العالمي للوقاية من الجوائح والتأهب والاستجابة لها.

ويعني ذلك تعزيز الحوكمة والقيادة، وزيادة التمويل، وتقوية النظم والأدوات، بالاستناد إلى مبادئ الإنصاف والشمول والتضامن.

واستجابةً لقرار اتخذ في الدورة الاستثنائية التاريخية لجمعية الصحة العالمية، اجتمعت هيئة التفاوض الحكومية الدولية خلال الأسبوع الماضي بغرض بدء العمل على اتفاق دولي يرمي إلى تعزيز الوقاية من الجوائح والتأهب والاستجابة لها.

وتكتسي مشاركة بلدانكم في هذه العملية أهمية بالغة.

فالعالم بحاجة إلى الاستماع إلى آراء جميع البلدان، بما فيها البلدان العربية، والتي لديها خبرة واسعة في مواجهة الطوارئ الصحية.

وسيساعد هذا الصك القانوني على تحديد قواعد اللعبة عند حدوث فاشية أو جائحة.

كما تعمل أمانة المنظمة مع الدول الأعضاء على إنشاء مبادرات جديدة في سبيل تعزيز التأهب على الصعيدين الوطني والعالمي، بما فيها مركز منظمة الصحة العالمية لتحليل المعلومات عن الجوائح والأوبئة، ونظام مركز السلامة الحيوية التابع لمنظمة الصحة العالمية، والاستعراض الشامل للصحة والتأهب.

رابعاً، لا بد منا أن نسخر قوة العلم والبحث والابتكار والتكنولوجيات الرقمية لتسريع التقدم صوب تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة.

لم يسبق أن توفرت لدى أي جيل عبر التاريخ أدوات أقوى من تلك المتوفرة لدينا لتعزيز الصحة والوقاية من الأمراض، وتوفير منتجات وخدمات صحية مبتكرة، والتأهب للفاشيات والأوبئة والوقاية منها والكشف عنها والاستجابة لها بسرعة.

ولكننا نواجه أيضاً تحدياً كبيراً يتمثل في ضمان إتاحة هذه الأدوات المنقذة للأرواح إتاحة منصفة. وقد كان الإنصاف أحد التحديات الحاسمة لهذه الجائحة.

لهذا السبب أنشأنا مركز نقل تكنولوجيا الرنا المرسال في جنوب أفريقيا، وتمت الموافقة حتى الآن على أن يزود المركز 13 بلداً بهذه التكنولوجيا، بما فيها مصر وتونس في إقليمكم.

وتتمثل الأولوية الخامسة في أنه يجب علينا أن نمكّن المنظمة من الوفاء بولايتها بوصفها "سلطة التوجيه والتنسيق في ميدان العمل الصحي الدولي"، بما في ذلك في مجال التأهب للجوائح والاستجابة لها.

إن وجود منظمة قوية في صميم الهيكل الصحي العالمي يتيح تفادي التجزؤ وبحسن القيمة لقاء المال، ليس فقط فيما يخص استثماراتكم في المنظمة، بل في النظام الإيكولوجي الصحي العالمي برمته وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، يواصل الفريق العامل المعني بالتمويل المستدام جهوده الرامية إلى ضمان توفير تمويل طويل الأجل ويمكن وسيتوقف نجاح المنظمة في المستقبل على دعمكم لاقتراحات الفريق العامل، والمتمثلة في زيادة الاشتراكات المقدرة بنسبة 50% من ميزانيتنا بحلول الثنائية 2028-2029 واستكمال عملية وضع ميزانيتنا البرمجية بنموذج لتجديد الموارد وأخيراً، سأعمل مع مديرنا الإقليمي على تنفيذ التوصية المتعلقة بتقييم عملية تحول المنظمة، والتي تقضي بتكريس الاهتمام والموارد لدعم عملية التحول على المستوى القطري في المرحلة المقبلة. وتتمثل مهمتنا، في نهاية المطاف، في إحداث أثر ملموس في حياة الأشخاص الذين نخدمهم. شكراً لكم جميعاً على شراكتكم ودعمكم المستمرين، وأنتطلع إلى مناقشتنا اليوم (شكراً لكم. شكراً بالعربية). شكراً جزيلاً (بالفرنسية).

- ii) WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the Member State Information Session on the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2

30 November 2021

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, dear colleagues and friends,

The emergence of the Omicron variant has understandably captured global attention.

The emergence of any new variant should capture our attention, especially one as highly mutated as Omicron.

The WHO Secretariat takes this development extremely seriously, and so should all Member States.

But we should not be surprised. This is what viruses do. Inclusive we

And as I have said many times, the longer we allow the pandemic to drag on – by failing to address vaccine inequity, or to implement public health and social measures in a tailored and consistent way – the more opportunity we give this virus to mutate in ways we cannot predict or prevent.

We still have more questions than answers about the effect of Omicron on transmission, severity of disease, and the effectiveness of tests, therapeutics and vaccines.

The Secretariat is working with partners all over the world to fill in our knowledge gaps as quickly as possible.

Doctors Mike Ryan and Maria Van Kerkhove will provide more detail in a few minutes.

Once again, I thank Botswana and South Africa for detecting, sequencing and reporting this variant so rapidly.

ASSERT KNOWLEDGE OF

It is deeply concerning to me that those countries are now being penalized by others for doing the right thing.

I well understand the concern of all countries to protect their citizens against a variant that we don't yet fully understand.

But I am equally concerned that several Member States are introducing blunt, blanket measures that are not evidence-based or effective on their own, and which will only worsen inequities.

We call on all Member States to take rational, proportional risk-reduction measures, in keeping with the International Health Regulations.

We continue to call on all Member States to optimize public health and social measures and ensure that high-risk and vulnerable individuals in all countries are fully vaccinated immediately.

The global response must be calm, coordinated and coherent.

At the same time, we must not forget that we are already dealing with a highly transmissible, dangerous variant – the Delta variant, which accounts for almost all cases globally.

We need to use the tools we already have to prevent transmission and save lives from Delta. And if we do that, we will also prevent transmission and save lives from Omicron – so enhancing surveillance, testing, sequencing and reporting.

The Secretariat will keep Member States and the public updated as we learn more.

Mike, over to you.