

Happy New Year?

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By Guillermo Alvarado

Thousands of cancelled flights around the world, schools, offices and other workplaces closed and a lot of uncertainty regarding the immediate future due to the covid-19 pandemic, show that 2022 did not start better than last year ended.

The disturbing outlook was pointed out by the director general of the World Health Organization, WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who called for not minimizing the danger of the Omicron variant, which has a transmission speed not seen in previous strains.

The fact that it is less lethal than Delta does not mean that it is mild, the official said, and recalled that in recent weeks hospitals in many countries have been collapsing in the face of the large number of cases,

some of which are progressing towards seriousness and death.

The facts prove it. In the United States, a staggering one million new cases were reported in just 24 hours on Monday, January 3, and the numbers are climbing in other places, such as the WHO European Region, where restrictive measures are once again being adopted.

In addition to the statistics, Ghebreyesus referred to the problems arising from global inequality in access to vaccines.

For months now, the organization has been proposing that all countries should have ten percent of their population fully vaccinated by the end of September 2021, an indicator that should rise to 40 points by December 31.

However, of the 192 WHO members, 92 did not reach that goal and 36 ended last year below 10 percent of their population fully immunized, all of them belonging to the so-called poor world.

It is clear enough to everyone by now that a virus changes its properties, i.e. mutates, when it is transmitted from one host to another numerous times, so that a small group of states do nothing by vaccinating their entire population, if the disease is rampant in the rest.

Scientists have known this from the beginning, but the big transnational laboratories, instead of using common sense, used that of greed and opted to accumulate gigantic profits, selling their products to the richest, which hindered an equitable distribution.

Worse still, an inexplicable and unacceptable anti-vaccine movement grew in the supposedly developed nations, while millions of excluded people clamored for help to contain the virus.

There is nothing to suggest that this behavior will change in 2022, making it very difficult to wish a "Happy New Year" to a humanity bent, with few exceptions, on making itself unhappy.

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