

Statement to WHA76 - UHC

Agenda item 13.1 - Reorienting health systems to primary health care as a resilient foundation for universal health coverage and preparations for a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on universal health coverage

Thank you chair,

Health Action International is pleased to take the floor on an issue as important as Universal Health Coverage (UHC). We welcome the report by the Secretariat but note with deep concern the lack of progress towards the fulfilment of SDG 3, as measured by indicators on coverage of essential health services and catastrophic out-of-pocket health spending.

Access to medicines plays a crucial role in the fulfilment of the human right to health and is an integral component of UHC. For far too many, out-of-pocket procurement of medicines is a cause of economic hardship. It is high time that WHO effectively supports governments and public entities to explore all possible policy options that reinforce access to medicines and other health technologies, making them affordable, sustainable and secure. This includes greater transparency in public procurement schemes, health-oriented IP management and consistent investment in public health services and systems.

We look forward to the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on UHC and remain hopeful that a bold and forceful intervention by the international community may reverse the trend of growing inequality and disparities in access to healthcare.

With the Alma Ata anniversary and other milestones celebrated this week in mind, we agree on the need to place primary health care at the core of public health interventions. We also support the efforts of WHO and others to streamline resources, assist capacity building and ensure accountability, and to guarantee that, after 75 years, the hope of health for all becomes a reality.

-End-

(check against delivery)

May 2023

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