

Statement to the Seventy-second World Health Assembly
Agenda Item 11.5
Universal Health Coverage

Thank you chair,

Without universal access to quality assured essential medicines, the ambition of Universal Health Coverage, that leaves no-one behind, will fail. That's it. End of story.

Access to medicines, as a key component of UHC, depends on the affordability of medical technologies, both to the payers (governments, social insurance funds and so on) and to patients who have to pay out of pocket.

The unaffordable price of many treatments is a major obstacle to access, and authorities should be able to negotiate prices with full transparency of the real cost of production, and look for equivalent treatments by any means necessary. The use of TRIPS flexibilities is a valid mechanism that increases competition, lowers prices and improves access to medicines. And is a policy tool at the disposal of national authorities to achieve UHC.

UHC and its sister, Universal Access to Essential Medicines, depends on an efficient procurement and supply chain, as well as skilled and fairly paid healthcare workers who will prescribe and dispense those medicines.

Sexual and reproductive health rights, including access to family planning and commodities, are an integral part of UHC. Failure to bring together the basic building blocks of health systems leads to the preventable loss of women's lives every day.

Only a well-funded and well-informed health system can guarantee UHC, through strong political stewardship, rooted and supported by the global leadership shown to us here today by the WHO.

Thank you