



## **Salalah Declaration on Universal Health Coverage 2018**

### **The Road to Universal Health Coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**

We, participants in the Ministerial Meeting on “The Road to Universal Health Coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region”, gathered in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman, 3–5 September 2018:

**RECOGNIZE** the key role of Universal Health Coverage in realizing the right to health care and the right to health of all people in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;

**RECALL** previous international and regional declarations on Universal Health Coverage, in particular the Qatar Declaration on Primary Health Care of 2008, the Tunis Declaration on Value for Money, Sustainability and Accountability in the Health Sector of 2012 and the Manama Declaration on Financing Health Systems of 2013;

**RECALL** previous Universal Health Coverage-related resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the World Health Assembly and the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, in particular Resolution EM/RC60/R.2 of 2013 of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean;

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the efforts made by the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region to identify health system challenges and develop policies and strategies to address them;

**RECOGNIZE** the fundamental importance of strong, resilient, well-governed and quality health systems to advance towards Universal Health Coverage, and the importance of programmes addressing public health, communicable diseases, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) to respond to specific individual and population health needs;

**EMPHASIZE** the contribution of Universal Health Coverage to fulfilling the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development relating to equity, security and economic growth;

**EMPHASIZE** the close relationship between Universal Health Coverage and Health Security and the need to integrate strategies for emergency preparedness, response and recovery and health system strengthening – paying special consideration to refugees, migrants and internally displaced people;

**STRESS** the integral importance of quality and patient safety in health care systems, without which Universal Health Coverage cannot be realized;

**REAFFIRM** our commitment to Universal Health Coverage in all countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, this being both a *desirable* and a *possible* policy goal at all levels of national income, including in countries affected by emergencies;

**RECOGNIZE** the importance of family practice-based primary health care in both the public and private sectors in ensuring progress towards Universal Health Coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region;

**CALL ON** the Heads of State and Government of all countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, at their various levels of socioeconomic development, to endorse a vision of Universal Health Coverage in their social, economic and health policies, and to develop a roadmap – with milestones and targets – to realize that vision;

**CALL ON** Ministers of Health, Ministers of Finance and relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, civil society organizations and the private sector, to develop national Universal Health Coverage compacts, based on the UHC2030 Global Compact, and to hold themselves accountable for implementing those compacts;

**CALL ON** decision-makers and policy-makers in health and health-related fields to adopt the Framework for Action on Advancing Universal Health Coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and to work towards implementing its associated actions;

**CALL ON** health policy-makers to:

1. **DEFINE** a context-specific Essential Health Service Package, to be based on globally and regionally identified Universal Health Coverage Priority Benefit Packages (UHC-PBPs) – taking into consideration each country’s burden of disease, economic imperatives and people’s preferences;
2. **ESTABLISH/RECONFIGURE** prepayment arrangements for various population groups – leaving no one behind – to be financed via budget allocation and/or mandatory contributions so as to reduce fragmentation, enhance equity and promote financial and social protection;
3. **DEDICATE** strong and continuous attention to quality and patient safety in health care systems in both the public and the non-profit and for-profit private sectors, with an emphasis on engaging and empowering people to improve health care access;
4. **EXTEND** the coverage of quality health services, embracing family practice, improving infrastructure, increasing workforce availability, performance and relevance, and improving access to essential medicines and health technologies – considering available resources and equitable distribution;
5. **EXPAND** the goal of Universal Health Coverage to non-nationals residing within national territories, including refugees and migrant workers as well as other marginalized groups, using innovative financing arrangements;
6. **IMPROVE** essential public health functions and preparedness capacity to implement and monitor the International Health Regulations (2005) for strengthening health systems towards Universal Health Coverage;
7. **ESTABLISH** inclusive multisectoral platforms for policy dialogue to facilitate stakeholder involvement in formulating the vision for Universal Health Coverage and its subsequent implementation;
8. **ADOPT** the principles of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to ensure an integrated approach in countries affected by emergencies;
9. **STRENGTHEN** national health information systems, including eHealth, to monitor progress towards Universal Health Coverage as part of the Sustainable Development Agenda;
10. **STRENGTHEN** governance arrangements to improve performance, accountability, responsiveness and participation, including efforts to raise awareness and create positive behavioral change;

**CALL ON** development partners, including the World Health Organization, the World Bank, other United Nations agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors and development banks, to coordinate and support countries’ efforts by: sharing global experiences and good practices; building national capacities;

supporting inclusive policy dialogue on strengthening health systems to advance Universal Health Coverage; and facilitating resource mobilization to implement agreed strategies and options;

**CALL ON** the international community to extend its support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a key provider of health services to 6 million Palestinian refugees, in order to maintain its vital services to this vulnerable population without negatively impacting the host countries.