20 April 2018 – WHO concluded a special one-day seminar on enhancing universal health coverage for Somali people, with commitment from all parties to develop a roadmap in the coming months. Universal health coverage means ensuring that everyone, everywhere can access essential, quality health services, without facing financial hardship.

The seminar, held in Nairobi on 19 April 2018, was attended by representatives from the Governments of Somalia, Sudan, Kenya and Japan; health partners including United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Care International and Somali health NGO consortium representatives; and donors including United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Dr Ghulam Popal, WHO Representative for Somalia launched the event by stating the importance of universal health coverage for Somali people, and the opportunity presented by the seminar for building a platform to improve health, both in Somalia and Eastern Africa in general.

“It is critical for Somalia to take action, learning from the experiences shared by Sudan and Kenya, and we join hands with our partners to support Somalia in achieving universal health coverage for Somali people,” Dr Popal said.
The main outcome of the seminar was agreement on key priority actions for advancing universal health coverage for Somali people, including the development of a roadmap. Additionally, the Ministry of Health for Somalia reassured firm political commitment for universal health coverage in the country, with support from WHO, UN agencies and health partners.

As a fundamental human right, universal health coverage is based on the WHO Constitution of 1948, and the Health for All agenda set by the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1978. It is also entrenched in the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on good health and well-being.

The seminar drew from experiences in Kenya and Sudan, and was hosted with the generous support of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and the Government of Japan.

Monday 8th of April 2019 05:06:43 PM