Health Policy Forum
PHC for UHC
5th March

15 March 2021 - Only 2 years after the UHC2030 Global Compact was signed by all Member States in the Region, and despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19, Pakistan has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) through a primary health care (PHC) approach by hosting a mission of United Nations and development partners under the umbrella of the Global Action Plan for SDG3 and the Regional Health Alliance, which concluded in a joint statement on “Primary health care for universal health coverage in Pakistan”.

The statement issued in Islamabad by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination of Pakistan, WHO, UNICEF, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, Global Fund, the Global Financing Facility, World Bank, UNAIDS, UNFPA reaffirmed their support to Pakistan’s efforts towards achieving UHC. This joint statement builds on global and regional commitments that place PHC at the centre of efforts to achieve UHC and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations agencies and development partners are all part of an initiative to better support countries to accelerate progress towards the health-related SDGs under the "Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All" and to bring the countries closer to achieving the regional Vision of Health for All by All.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the first regional overarching health system WHO country mission to advance UHC as a top priority with the message that UHC cannot wait.

The mission brought together technical experts from the WHO Regional Office, headquarters and country office, and Global Action Plan partners to hold in-depth discussions with the national health authorities to enhance the country health system by investing in PHC for UHC. It employed “in-person” and “virtual” modality to cope with the conditions imposed by the pandemic and travel restrictions.

The findings of the mission reinforced the validity and importance of proposed reforms for effective and efficient health care delivery of the UHC benefit package. Moving forward, partners will work jointly to finalize an action plan to implement the various recommendations with budget and funding sources, covering 10 key areas:

- Support the government to exert its stewardship role and steer the health care reform.
- Advocate for the UHC Benefits Package at PHC level to expand coverage of the health insurance (Sehat Sahulat) programme and other higher level coverage arrangements.
- Re-strategize community health workers, in particular Lady Health Workers, aligning to the UHC Benefits Package, as a multipurpose and integrated part of the PHC team, including their scope of work, supervision, training.
- Finalize and adapt the UHC investment case as framework for provincial level planning and budgeting for implementation of the UHC Benefits Package.
- Engage in high-level advocacy for more domestic resources for health, while raising the possibility of public health taxes.
- Take a step-by-step approach towards efficiency gains in the health sector.
- Leverage the existing interest of partners to create a unified coordination forum that includes all stakeholders.
- Promote and institutionalize use of data for decision-making.
- Improve accountability measures and community engagement.
- Build “UHC literacy” amongst policy-makers and mid-level managers.

This will be followed with a process to develop a national ‘PHC for UHC Compact’ in connection with the UHC2030 Global Compact.

“While we are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PHC for UHC partnership highlights the importance of focusing on essential health services at all times. I would like to thank HE Dr. Faisal Sultan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Regulations and Coordination and the Government of Pakistan for their leadership,” said Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean in his remarks during the signing ceremony.

Related link

Primary Health Care for Universal Health Coverage in Pakistan. A joint statement by health and development partners on supporting the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in strategic collaboration to achieve universal health coverage, focusing on primary health care
Islamabad, 5 March 2021

Saturday 13th of July 2024 07:56:29 AM