



PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Interactive multistakeholder hearing as part of the preparatory process for the High-level meeting on universal health coverage

Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York
9 May 2023, 3.00 pm – 6.00 pm

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Background

At the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September 2019, Heads of State and Government approved an ambitious and comprehensive Political Declaration at a High-level meeting on universal health coverage (UHC). The Political Declaration reaffirms the right of every human being, without distinction of any kind, to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Member States strongly recommitted to achieve universal health coverage by 2030, with a view to scaling up the global effort to build a healthier world for all. The Political Declaration was adopted through General Assembly resolution 74/2, including a decision to convene a high-level meeting in 2023 in New York aimed to undertake a comprehensive review on the implementation of the Political Declaration to identify gaps and solutions to accelerate progress towards the achievement of universal health coverage by 2030.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/315, the high-level meeting will be convened on 21 September 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and shall approve a concise and action-oriented declaration.

As part of the preparatory process for the high-level meeting, the President of the General Assembly will convene an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant partners with a view to ensuring the most effective and efficient outcomes and potential deliverables and to sharing experiences and lessons learned to address remaining implementation gaps.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, insufficient progress on UHC and other health-related SDGs was evident, and following the pandemic, the world is now even further away from reaching the goals. While service coverage improved globally until 2019, at least 1.4 billion people incurred financial hardship due to health spending in 2021. The pandemic has severely disrupted health systems and essential health services. With the combined health and economic impacts of COVID-19, many people face greater financial constraints in accessing care. Among those paying out-of-pocket expenses for health services, financial hardship is likely to worsen further, particularly for poor, vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population. Building on the 2019 political commitments to UHC, world leaders have a unique opportunity to reinvigorate progress towards ensuring universal and equitable access to quality health services without financial hardship for all people, thus delivering health for all.

To ensure synergies across the three health-related processes of the General Assembly, the multistakeholder hearings as part of the preparatory process of the High-level meetings on

pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and on the fight against tuberculosis will be convened back-to-back with the multistakeholder hearing on universal health coverage. Ensuring coherence across the three High-level meetings is a priority for the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators of the three health-related processes, in line with the statements made by Member States during consultations.

II. Objectives

The purpose of the multistakeholder hearing is to benefit from the perspectives of all stakeholders, on urgent actions and investments in health to accelerate progress towards the achievement of UHC by 2030, and to identify concrete milestones towards achieving this goal.

The multistakeholder hearing will also assist in identifying the themes of the multi-stakeholder panels of the High-level meeting

III. Participation

The multistakeholder seeks the active participation of appropriate senior-level representatives of Member States, observers of the General Assembly, parliamentarians, representatives of local governments, relevant United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, invited civil society organizations, philanthropic foundations, academia, medical associations, the private sector and broader communities, ensuring the participation and voices of women, children, youth and Indigenous leadership. The hearing will be webcast live on UN WebTV.

IV. Format

The half-day interactive hearing will include an opening segment, two interactive panel discussions and a closing segment.

1. Panel 1: UHC as a driver to accelerate health for all
2. Panel 2: From UHC Commitment to Actions and Accountability

Each panel discussion will feature up to four speakers, with due regard to geographical representation, and gender balance. The sessions will include statements from panellists, to be followed by an interactive segment.

There will be no preestablished list of speakers and participants will be invited to indicate their interest to intervene during the panels.

V. Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the hearing prior to the high-level meeting.