

Agenda Item 13.1: Reorienting health systems to primary health care as a resilient foundation for universal health coverage and preparations for a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on universal health coverage

1. Chair, the Commonwealth Secretariat wishes to speak on Agenda Item 13.1
2. In September 2023, the United Nations General Assembly will convene a series of high-level meetings to mark the halfway point towards the Sustainable Development Goals, review progress relating to the Goals since 2015 and identify priority actions from 2023 onwards to ensure the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. In recognition of the importance of strengthening PHC within the 56 diverse Commonwealth countries, on May 20 2023, the Commonwealth Secretariat coordinated a ministerial meeting which aimed to review country efforts on PHC, and enable countries to work collectively to monitor progress and share best practice and expertise, in strengthening PHC reforms.
4. We thank the WHO Secretariat for this comprehensive report, which comes at the right time, as we continue discussions within Commonwealth countries on priority areas for action towards orientating of health systems towards primary care, in alignment with the 2018 Astana Declaration.
5. The Commonwealth Secretariat recognizes the importance of leveraging innovative strategies to improve PHC, including digital health technologies, multisectoral partnerships and through identifying sustainable funding solutions.
6. The Commonwealth, with its long-standing relationship with the WHO, and through the shared Memorandum of Understanding, will work with the WHO to support countries especially the vulnerable and small states as they accelerate the UHC 2030 targets.
7. Further, the Commonwealth Secretariat will support the member countries in developing a Commonwealth voice on UHC, to be tabled in the upcoming UN HLM in September 2023.
8. I thank you.