STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON AGENDA ITEM 7.1: UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: MOVING TOGETHER TO BUILD A HEALTHIER WORLD

Thank you Chairperson for giving Zambia this opportunity to take the floor on behalf of the 47 Africa Region Member States. The Africa Region welcomes the report on Universal Health Coverage: moving together to build a healthier world.

Our region bears the largest share of populations that lack access to essential health services, as well as bears consequences of catastrophic and impoverishing out-of-pocket expenditure.

Thus we commend the landmark political declaration made at the high level meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and commitments and action taken at country level. UHC is indeed at the centre of the 2030 agenda, GPW 13 for sustainable development, a prerequisite for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UHC goes hand in hand with quality health care services across the continuum of care. The Africa Region therefore commends Member States for reaching a consensus that the health and well-being of our people is most effectively, equitably and efficiently achieved through the Primary Health Care approach, making it the bedrock of a sustainable health system for UHC and the health-related SDGs.

Our region reaffirms its commitment to the Astana declaration and subscribes to the tenets of Primary Health Care including strengthening multisectoral collaboration an imperative to attaining UHC.

Chairperson, our region continues to record the highest levels of both maternal and neonatal mortalities although these can be prevented by low-cost interventions delivered through Primary Health Care.

We note the special programme on primary health care and its potential to contribute to the attainment of UHC. However, we request that secretariat provides more information on the program to member...
states. In addition, we call for secretariat to ensure that this program is integrated into the existing systems.

The Africa Region recognizes that attainment of UHC is a smart investment for every country because it is a fundamental right and a means to prosperity.

We however note with concern the slow pace at which coverage of essential health services is progressing and that health inequities continue to affect communities with a continued increase in out-of-pocket health expenditure.

A predictable and sustainable health care financing mechanism is therefore an imperative to the health care system reform if UHC is to be attained.

Thus, we welcome the call on increased domestic funding towards PHC and more investment in a comprehensive care package in order to achieve UHC, whilst being cognisant of countries that may be affected by conflict that may need universal solidarity to receive external assistance.

Lastly, we would like to commend WHO for its commitment in helping Member states’ progress towards UHC through health financing reforms, promoting innovation and equity, strengthening socio-political accountability, facilitating integration, efficiency and effectiveness through partner collaboration and monitoring of progress on the commitments.

There is however need for other stakeholders to also support Member states in ensuring investment into the key pillars of a health system inter alia human capital as well as interventions that focus on areas of greatest need as well as high quality disaggregated data.

The Africa Region notes the report. I thank you