



**European Union
Statement**

WHO

152nd Executive Board

(30 January - 7 February 2023)

Item 5 - Universal health coverage

Geneva, 1 February 2023

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152nd Session of the Executive Board

Item 5 - Universal health coverage

EU Statement

Chair,

Director-General,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

This statement is made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina* and the potential candidate country Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States support the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, including SDG3 and consider their integrated implementation of utmost importance.

We welcome the report by the Director-General and would like to address some essential points regarding UHC.

Strong, equitable and sustainably financed health systems are the backbone of quality primary health services, UHC and global health security. Health system strengthening should address financing, governance, human resources,

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

infrastructures, information system, access to commodities, health monitoring and service provision and participation of communities — at all level of services.

No country can provide UHC if essential public functions are not in place to protect and promote the health of the population.

It is necessary to consider primary health services as an essential part of information and service provision in health systems as a whole and not as a functionally separate entity.

Primary health care and services should be person centered, comprehensive and integrate all services that can be provided at primary level, including preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative services for communities and individuals, while other functions such as disease surveillance and other population level essential public health functions could be more efficiently organised at national or subnational level.

Primary health care and services should include health promotion, with special focus on non-communicable and communicable diseases, vaccination and infection prevention and control, care and services that promote, maintain and improve maternal, new born, child and adolescent health and mental health as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the outcomes of their review conferences and article 34 of the new EU Consensus on Development.

Primary health services are the first line of defence against epidemics and pandemics and other health crises and they should be sufficiently resilient to continue the provision of essential health services in emergency situations. The

community health workforce is a key player to promote access to quality primary health services.

Both for patients and health workforce, the issues of social and environmental determinants of health, inequity and gender equality in health systems should be considered as a prerequisite for equitable health systems and UHC.

Strengthening health systems and achieving UHC requires sufficient and sustainable financing, including through domestic health financing strategies based on a large and solidarity-based pooling of funds and on national context needs. Social protection to guarantee that everybody can access health services without experiencing a financial catastrophe is the key to increasing equality in access.

Thank you.