Indonesia is working towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme. The goal was to create a system that accommodated and adapted to Indonesia’s highly variable and heterogeneous condition to enable health care to reach all population. Our NHI was established on 1 January 2014 and since then, its membership has reached 224 million, or more than 82% of the Indonesian population. This number includes 96.4 million in the poor and near-poor category whose fees are subsidized by the government.

NHI was also associated with reducing out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure for health from 48.5% in 2014 to 32.1% in 2019. It means that NHI reduces the risk of impoverishment due to health expenses, especially for catastrophic diseases.

The high coverage of our NHI scheme also entails challenges such as membership verification and validation, reaching the so-called “missing middle” or informal sector to expand UHC, financing for catastrophic diseases, and financing sustainability for NHI. Despite all challenges, we consider our NHI scheme a long-term investment that can boost economic growth and social welfare, which in turn contributes to the attainment of the SDGs.

Indonesia is pivoting its current healthcare delivery towards a preventive model by strengthening the role of community health centres as the backbone of preventive care and chronic disease management at the primary care level. This policy is carried out not only by increasing the quantity and improving the distribution of primary health care centres but also by improving the quality of health workers.

We realized that role of the private sector is very important for sustainable health financing. Public-private partnerships (PPP) can be used to mobilize private finances, increase access, improve quality of service, introduce efficiencies, innovations and technology, and finally improve health outcomes. The Government of Indonesia has developed regulatory measures, fostered macroeconomic stability and also developed a framework for PPP to make significant progress on universal health coverage and contribute to the financial protection of the society, especially for poor communities.

As we know, health systems are being overwhelmed by COVID-19 while struggling to maintain essential health services. The current crisis has put the sustainable financing of the health system and pandemic preparedness to the test. We need to improve resilience in revenue-raising, pooling, purchasing and service delivery as a key in responding to such crises. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate existing arrangements to strengthen the healthcare system and prepare for future crises, as well as to improve efficiency and equity in access to health care.