REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
74th World Health Assembly
24 May 2021 - 01 June 2021

Pillar	**4**	**MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WHO PROVIDING BETTER SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES**
Agenda	**34**	**Progress Reports**
		Sustainable health financing structures and universal coverage

We recognize the significance of the various reports and resolutions issued by the World Health Assembly as well as the initiatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the sustainable health financing structures and universal coverage. We highlight some significant milestones that the Philippines has achieved over the past ten (10) years with reference to WHA 64.9 and our financing strategies in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equity and solidarity has been the guiding principles in the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act of 2019 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). The law afforded us to reform our health financing systems towards ensuring affordable and accessible healthcare goods and services and protecting all Filipinos against financial risk.

With the collaboration of the Department of Finance, Department of Health and health budget and Anti-tobacco advocates, health budgets increased by more than 50% in 2020, making it possible to subsidize the enrollment of the poor in the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP). As of 2019, there are 108 million Filipinos covered, translating to 100% coverage compared to 78.36 million in 2011. Likewise, out of pocket expenditures have been reduced from 52.4% in 2014 to 47.9 % in 2019, with subsidy measures to address the health needs of the very poor. With a reframed health service provision through primary care, benefit packages and contracting and payment mechanisms for frontline primary care facilities in a network system are now being worked out.

Efficiency in health spending is critical, especially at this time where many economies have been affected by the pandemic, with clear delineation and complementation of sources of funds. Strategic purchasing to leverage limited resources to achieve UHC goals amidst this pandemic has to be resorted. In a devolved health system set-up, stronger and sustained financing in local governments is the driving force to strengthen the delivery and equitable access to healthcare services. And, through a whole-of-government approach, our country commits to the attainment of UHC that will allow sustained investments, across all levels of government, for equitable health care.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many economies necessitating the passage of laws to rationalize and ensure budget allocations for health in the country. The need to fully reopen the economy is wanting but measures to ensure public health safety and social amelioration programs must also be put in place, without sacrificing health budgets. The Philippines implemented measures to fund COVID-19 efforts. Cognizant of the importance of vaccines to stem catastrophic cost and in the attainment of herd immunity, supplemental funding for these was derived from pooling generated savings and unutilized funds, expenditure reallocation of discontinued non-urgent programs, projects, and other measures to address the fiscal deficit. Another significant budgetary measure adopted was enhanced COVID-19 benefit packages through pre-payment mechanisms.

We affirm our continued support and commitments in attaining universal coverage by collaborating with the international community, other Member States and the WHO in sharing our best experiences on UHC implementation using performance governance measures, Sin Tax reforms and various learning and sharing capacity building programs.