



Special Session Proposal

Sustainable Health: Progress Towards Universal Health Coverage as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3.8) across the Globe and Regional Disparities

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Abstract

Universal health coverage (UHC), one of the fundamental health goals within the scope of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda adopted in 2015, aims to ensure that people, no matter who they are and where they live, can receive quality health services when and where they are needed without experiencing financial hardship. UHC is among the countries' commitments related to SDG 3.8 targets on '*good health and well-being*'. With its vital importance in fulfilling this core promise of the 2030 Agenda for Global Goals, UHC reflects the essence of the discourse of '*leaving no one behind*' and affirms health as a fundamental human right.

The Global Monitoring Reports (WHO), published every two years since 2015, provide a cautionary global outlook on the status and progress of countries over the last two decades in achieving their UHC-related SDG targets. The current report contains alarming assessments indicating that, worldwide, healthcare service coverage is not improving and financial protection is deteriorating. Globally, more people receive the essential healthcare they need, and fewer people worldwide face financial difficulties due to health issues over the last two decades. However, during the last ten years, progress has slowed.

Every country's health system is attempting to discover its own way to achieve UHC and other health-related SDG objectives. Beyond health policies that address financial barriers to accessing health services, governments must also concentrate more on delivering regionally integrated and equitable high-quality healthcare services.

This special session aims to shed light on the progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) as a Sustainable Development Goal (specifically SDG 3.8) across the globe. Regional science research on progress toward UHC and enhancement of equity across countries has practical importance, contributing to the design and assessment of health policies that '*leave no one behind*'. □