

Thank you Chair and distinguished members of the Executive Board. I am speaking on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and the People's Health Movement.

We welcome the increasing interest on the concept of Universal Health Coverage, though we would prefer the term Universal Health Care. We appreciate that this issue represents a new strategical priority of WHO on a dynamic process towards sustainable development.

However, we would like to express our concern on the promotion of Universal Health Coverage with the shift in terminology from universal health care to universal health coverage, suggesting a reliance on an insurance-based model, especially with the involvement of commercial for-profit private sector.

Although it is reported that Universal Health Coverage is not a fixed minimum package, we perceive the risk that it would provide a basic package of care.

We are concerned that it would perpetuate the selective primary health care approach that replaced the Alma Ata principles, through a market driven process.

We urge member states to reconsider such an approach, which can lead to the dismantling of the public health system while providing increasing space for the commercial for-profit private sector. We suggest the return to the concept of universal health care, to be achieved through organized and accountable systems of high quality public provision of comprehensive primary health care.

We are concerned that the focus on "service delivery" could divert attention from the needed action on structural determinants of health and from tackling the root causes of ill-health processes, as well as from the active role that citizens and communities must play in shaping health services.

Equal access to healthcare is an underlying social determinant of health, but just one of many. Striving for Universal Health Coverage should be part of a comprehensive strategy, including the focus on structural determinants of health.

The global financial crisis underpins the growing health inequities within and between countries, and the ongoing processes of privatization and commercialisation of public services will enhance them.

We call upon member states to uphold the fundamentals of publicly provided and financed comprehensive health systems, that can guarantee equal access for all, rather than mere basic coverage through an insurance-based system.

Thank you.