Media Note: International Universal Health Coverage Day
Global Community Calls for Urgent Action Together to Achieve Health for All

First Official United Nations Awareness Day on Universal Health Coverage Recognised by Events Worldwide

12 DECEMBER 2018 – Leaders and advocates around the world are calling for greater access to quality, affordable health care for everyone on the first official International Universal Health Coverage Day. While universal health coverage has been celebrated in the past, this year is the first to be recognised as an official United Nations awareness day. This year's UHC Day, themed "*Unite for Universal Health Coverage: Now is the Time for Collective Action*" emphasises the critical importance of strong health systems to reduce poverty, promote economic growth and achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

On last year's UHC Day, the United Nations officially proclaimed 12 December International Universal Health Coverage Day, signifying unprecedented momentum and global commitment to achieving Health for All by 2030. With the official designation, which was brought forth by the Government of Thailand, this year's UHC Day will be the farthest-reaching since it was first organised in 2014 by the Universal Health Coverage Coalition.

UHC Day is also an important milestone ahead of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, which will take place in September 2019. The High-Level Meeting will convene world leaders to pledge actionable steps to make Health for All a reality by 2030.

UHC Movement is Growing and Expanding Access to Essential Health Services
According to the Global UHC Monitoring Report 2017, at least half the world's population still lacks access to essential health services and catastrophic health expenses push almost 100 million people into extreme poverty every year. However, as the movement has grown, countries are increasingly taking action in expanding access to essential health services.

Thailand, a key convener of the first UHC Day in 2012, has extended basic health coverage to 99.9% of its population by bolstering and expanding its primary healthcare system and providing comprehensive health benefits that require no copayment. As a result, the country has improved its health outcomes and reduced household spending on health.

Similarly, Ghana invests in three key elements of UHC: financial protection, quality of services and access to services. Ghana has operated a national health insurance scheme for over 12 years and as a result, one third of the population is covered. Ghana also has a national quality strategy, which provides a coordinated approach to ensuring quality in all aspects of healthcare. Community based health and planning services, which serves as the pinnacle of primary health care, is a critical element of this effort.

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The Road Ahead: Accelerating Progress and Leaving No One Behind

This year's UHC Day builds on the momentum of recent milestones such as World Health Day 2018 and the second Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana, Kazakhstan. Stakeholders hope to make the first multi-stakeholder-led, UN Official Day the most impactful yet by committing to five central pillars of achieving UHC:

- Ensuring political commitment and multi-stakeholder action
- Leaving no one behind by reaching every person and community with comprehensive, quality health services
- Engaging community voices to ensure that all are represented
- Investing more and smarter by mobilizing resources equitably and efficiently
- Holding leaders accountable by improving monitoring and feedback mechanisms

UHC2030 is a movement for accelerating equitable and sustainable progress towards UHC. UHC2030 provides a multi-stakeholder platform to promote collaboration in countries and globally on health systems strengthening. UHC2030 advocates for increased political commitment to UHC and facilitate accountability and knowledge sharing.

UHC2030 convenes and houses a multi-stakeholder Coordination Group on International UHC Day that includes Member States, United Nations Systems, civil society, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and academia. The group developed the identity and campaign materials for UHC Day, building on the previous efforts of UHC Day.

In 2018, UHC2030 funded over 60 UHC Day campaigns in 35+ countries. The events are led by multi-stakeholder groups, such as civil society, community organizations, youth groups, academia, health experts, parliamentarians and journalists. More events are independently taking place all over the world, including events in Geneva, Nairobi, Tokyo and Berlin.

Over the past 30 years, World AIDS Day has galvanised global stakeholders, leaders and advocates to drive collective action toward alleviating the global burden of HIV. Near future, UHC Day may similarly become a household name and serve as an anchor point for the international community to drive progress toward health for all.

UHC Day Microsite: www.UHCDay.org
Primary Hashtag: #HealthForAll
Secondary Hashtag: #UHCDay
Official Twitter Account: @UHC2030
UHC Day Quote Cards: universalhealthcoverageday.org/toolkit/#messages

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Events Worldwide Celebrate International Health Coverage Day

International Universal Health Coverage Day at the UN: New York, USA

The WHO Office at the UN, together with the Group of Friends of UHC, will host a flagship event at the United Nations Headquarters on December 12th. The panel discussion will explore multi-stakeholder perspectives on the UHC agenda and upcoming High-Level Meeting on UHC, with contributions from Permanent Representatives, the UN system, UHC2030, and civil society representatives.

Additionally, through micro-grant funding, UHC2030 supported more than 60 UHC Day events in 35+ countries. But Below is a short sample of events supported by UHC2030.

Ageing Nepal: Nagarjun Municipality, Nepal

Ageing Nepal is planning a weeklong campaign in to promote UHC for marginalized populations, especially the elderly. Activities including a health camp, rally, awareness session, op-ed campaign and roundtable discussion.

All Together in Dignity: Dublin, Ireland

All Together in Dignity's UHC Day panel will launch a series of educational workshops for young adults, focusing on the role of youth in supporting UHC reform in Ireland.

Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Program: Nairobi County, Kenya

Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Program is hosting a series of events, including a football tournament for adolescent girls and young women in the informal settlements of Nairobi, a match between the winning team and a team of stakeholders and members of the

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County Health Management Team, a concert, a march, signature-collecting and much more! Their events aim to promote awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights.

Guyana Nurses Association: Georgetown, Guyana

The Guyana Nurses Association will observe UHC Day with a march including representatives of the Ministry of Public Health, PAHO/WHO, the Ministry of Education, the Ethnic Relations Commission, civil society organizations and health professionals, followed by a panel on working across sectors to increase access to health services.

Health, Education and Literacy Programme: Karachi, Pakistan

Health, Education and Literacy Programme (HELP) is hosting two events: an advocacy seminar for Pakistani media on UHC and a walk leading to the collection of signatures for a petition to be presented to the Provincial Health Minister/Secretary to remind the government that it's time to deliver on UHC.

IFMSA: Global Youth

"Hack for UHC Education!" is a global hackathon to generate innovative ideas to advocate for the inclusion of UHC in medical and health school curricula.

Iniciar for Global Action: Argentina

On December 12, Iniciar for Global Action Foundation will disseminate the conclusions of their second "Health for All Because Every Life Matters" meeting. They will utilize social media networks and speaker presentations, and will also launch a Health for All magazine.

Journalists Association Against AIDS: Lilongwe, Malawi

Journalists Association Against AIDS (JournAIDS) will convene a high-level panel co-hosted by 12 partners, which will be broadcast live on the radio with opportunities for people across Malawi to participate via text message. The panel will focus on whether user fees are sustainable for health financing and universal health coverage.

People's Health Movement: Tanzania, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

People's Health Movement (PHM) Tanzania, together with Hubert Kairuki Memorial University Students' Association, will collaborate to organize a march in Dar Es Salaam across the city, commemorating UHC Day with partners like the Ministry of Health.

SERAC-Bangladesh: Dhaka, Bangladesh

SERAC-Bangladesh will celebrate UHC Day in conjunction with the Bangladeshi national election, bringing together candidates for parliament, youth, health professionals, economists, women and civil society organizations to generate political commitments to UHC.

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