

Declaration of Astana

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN
25-26 OCTOBER 2018

GLOBAL CONFERENCE
ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE



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Global Conference on Primary Health Care

From Alma-Ata towards universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals

Astana, Kazakhstan, 25 and 26 October 2018

We, Heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives of States and Governments[1], participating in the Global Conference on Primary Health Care: From Alma-Ata towards universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals, meeting in Astana on 25 and 26 October 2018, reaffirming the commitments expressed in the ambitious and visionary Declaration of Alma-Ata of 1978 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in pursuit of Health for All, hereby make the following Declaration.

We envision

Governments and societies that prioritize, promote and protect people's health and well-being, at both population and individual levels, through strong health systems;

Primary health care and health services that are high quality, safe, comprehensive, integrated, accessible, available and affordable for everyone and everywhere, provided with compassion, respect and dignity by health professionals who are well-trained, skilled, motivated and committed;

Enabling and health-conducive environments in which individuals and communities are empowered and engaged in maintaining and enhancing their health and well-being;

Partners and stakeholders aligned in providing effective support to national health policies, strategies and plans.

[1] As well as representatives of regional economic integration organizations.



I

We strongly affirm our commitment to the fundamental right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without distinction of any kind. Convening on the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration of Alma-Ata, we reaffirm our commitment to all its values and principles, in particular to justice and solidarity, and we underline the importance of health for peace, security and socioeconomic development, and their interdependence.

II

We are convinced that strengthening primary health care (PHC) is the most inclusive, effective and efficient approach to enhance people's physical and mental health, as well as social well-being, and that PHC is a cornerstone of a sustainable health system for universal health coverage (UHC) and health-related Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome the convening in 2019 of the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on UHC, to which this Declaration will contribute. We will each pursue our paths to achieving UHC so that all people have equitable access to the quality and effective health care they need, ensuring that the use of these services does not expose them to financial hardship.

III

We acknowledge that in spite of remarkable progress over the last 40 years, people in all parts of the world still have unaddressed health needs. Remaining healthy is challenging for many people, particularly the poor and people in vulnerable situations. We find it ethically, politically, socially and economically unacceptable that inequity in health and disparities in health outcomes persist.

We will continue to address the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases, which lead to poor health and premature deaths due to tobacco use, the harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy lifestyles and behaviours, and insufficient physical activity and unhealthy diets. Unless we act immediately, we will continue to lose lives prematurely because of wars, violence, epidemics, natural disasters, the health impacts of climate change and extreme weather events and other environmental factors. We must not lose opportunities to halt disease outbreaks and global health threats such as antimicrobial resistance that spread beyond countries' boundaries.

Promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative services and palliative care must be accessible to all. We must save millions of people from poverty, particularly extreme poverty, caused by disproportionate out-of-pocket spending on health. We can no longer underemphasize the crucial importance of health promotion and disease prevention, nor tolerate fragmented, unsafe or poor-quality care. We must address the shortage and uneven distribution of health workers. We must act on the growing costs of health care and medicines and vaccines. We cannot afford waste in health care spending due to inefficiency.

We commit to:

IV

Make bold political choices for health across all sectors

We reaffirm the primary role and responsibility of Governments at all levels in promoting and protecting the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. We will promote multisectoral action and UHC, engaging relevant stakeholders and empowering local communities to strengthen PHC. We will address economic, social and environmental determinants of health and aim to reduce risk factors by mainstreaming a Health in All Policies approach. We will involve more stakeholders in the achievement of Health for All, leaving no one behind, while addressing and managing conflicts of interest, promoting transparency and implementing participatory governance. We will strive to avoid or mitigate conflicts that undermine health systems and roll back health gains. We must use coherent and inclusive approaches to expand PHC as a pillar of UHC in emergencies, ensuring the continuum of care and the provision of essential health services in line with humanitarian principles. We will appropriately provide and allocate human and other resources to strengthen PHC. We applaud the leadership and example of Governments who have demonstrated strong support for PHC.

V

Build sustainable primary health care

PHC will be implemented in accordance with national legislation, contexts and priorities. We will strengthen health systems by investing in PHC. We will enhance capacity and infrastructure for primary care – the first contact with health services – prioritizing essential public health functions. We will prioritize disease prevention and health promotion and will aim to meet all people's health needs across the life course through comprehensive preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative services and palliative care. PHC will provide a comprehensive range of services and care, including but not limited to vaccination; screenings; prevention, control and management of noncommunicable and communicable diseases; care and services that promote, maintain and improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; and mental health and sexual and reproductive health[2]. PHC will also be accessible, equitable, safe, of high quality, comprehensive, efficient, acceptable, available and affordable, and will deliver continuous, integrated services that are people-centred and gender-sensitive. We will strive to avoid fragmentation and ensure a functional referral system between primary and other levels of care. We will benefit from sustainable PHC that enhances health systems' resilience to prevent, detect and respond to infectious diseases and outbreaks.

[2] In joining consensus, the delegation of the United States of America wishes to draw attention to objective 8.25 of the Programme of Action of the Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, which states "in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning".





The success of primary health care will be driven by:

Knowledge and capacity-building. We will apply knowledge, including scientific as well as traditional knowledge, to strengthen PHC, improve health outcomes and ensure access for all people to the right care at the right time and at the most appropriate level of care, respecting their rights, needs, dignity and autonomy. We will continue to research and share knowledge and experience, build capacity and improve the delivery of health services and care.

Human resources for health. We will create decent work and appropriate compensation for health professionals and other health personnel working at the primary health care level to respond effectively to people's health needs in a multidisciplinary context. We will continue to invest in the education, training, recruitment, development, motivation and retention of the PHC workforce, with an appropriate skill mix. We will strive for the retention and availability of the PHC workforce in rural, remote and less developed areas. We assert that the international migration of health personnel should not undermine countries', particularly developing countries', ability to meet the health needs of their populations.

Technology. We support broadening and extending access to a range of health care services through the use of high-quality, safe, effective and affordable medicines, including, as appropriate, traditional medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and other technologies. We will promote their accessibility and their rational and safe use and the protection of personal data. Through advances in information systems, we will be better able to collect appropriately disaggregated, high-quality data and to improve information continuity, disease surveillance, transparency, accountability and monitoring of health system performance. We will use a variety of technologies to improve access to health care, enrich health service delivery, improve the quality of service and patient safety, and increase the efficiency and coordination of care. Through digital and other technologies, we will enable individuals and communities to identify their health needs, participate in the planning and delivery of services and play an active role in maintaining their own health and well-being.

Financing. We call on all countries to continue to invest in PHC to improve health outcomes. We will address the inefficiencies and inequities that expose people to financial hardship resulting from their use of health services by ensuring better allocation of resources for health, adequate financing of primary health care and appropriate reimbursement systems in order to improve access and achieve better health outcomes. We will work towards the financial sustainability, efficiency and resilience of national health systems, appropriately allocating resources to PHC based on national context. We will leave no one behind, including those in fragile situations and conflict-affected areas, by providing access to quality PHC services across the continuum of care.

VI

Empower individuals and communities.

We support the involvement of individuals, families, communities and civil society through their participation in the development and implementation of policies and plans that have an impact on health. We will promote health literacy and work to satisfy the expectations of individuals and communities for reliable information about health. We will support people in acquiring the knowledge, skills and resources needed to maintain their health or the health of those for whom they care, guided by health professionals. We will protect and promote solidarity, ethics and human rights. We will increase community ownership and contribute to the accountability of the public and private sectors for more people to live healthier lives in enabling and health-conducive environments.

VII

Align stakeholder support to national policies, strategies and plans.

We call on all stakeholders – health professionals, academia, patients, civil society, local and international partners, agencies and funds, the private sector, faith-based organizations and others – to align with national policies, strategies and plans across all sectors, including through people-centred, gender-sensitive approaches, and to take joint actions to build stronger and sustainable PHC towards achieving UHC. Stakeholder support can assist countries to direct sufficient human, technological, financial and information resources to PHC. In implementing this Declaration, countries and stakeholders will work together in a spirit of partnership and effective development cooperation, sharing knowledge and good practices while fully respecting national sovereignty and human rights.

- **We will act on this Declaration in solidarity and coordination between Governments, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and all other stakeholders.**
- **All people, countries and organizations are encouraged to support this movement.**
- **Countries will periodically review the implementation of this Declaration, in cooperation with stakeholders.**
- **Together we can and will achieve health and well-being for all, leaving no one behind.**



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