

Speaker's Briefing Note

Accelerating universal health coverage for a more resilient world: the road to the 2027 high level meeting

Seventh annual ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage & Global Health

Co-hosted by the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of UHC & Global Health (Georgia, Japan and Thailand)

Co-organized by WHO, UHC2030, and UN Foundation

Date: 23 September 2026

Time: 1:15 – 2:30 PM

Venue: Conference Room 11, UNHQ

Registration: [Register here by 17 September](#)

Livestream: UN WebTV

Interpretation: available in Arabic, French, Spanish

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BACKGROUND

Despite critical health gains over the past couple decades, global progress has slowed during the SDG era, leaving the world off track to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030. An estimated 4.6 billion people still lacked access to essential health services in 2023, while 2.1 billion people experienced financial hardship due to health spending in 2022.¹ The 2025 ACT for UHC report found that persistent disparities in financing, service coverage, workforce capacity, and digital health continue to drive inequities both between and within countries. Current projections show gaps remaining substantial through 2030, with the UHC Service Coverage Index remaining below 80 and nearly 1 in 4 people worldwide still facing financial hardship from health-related costs.² In this context, the final push of the SDG era must reinforce that UHC is not only a health priority – it is a precondition, outcome, and indicator of broader sustainable development.

Since the UHC High-Level Meetings (HLM) in 2019 and 2023, countries have demonstrated that progress is possible through sustained political will and investment. That progress is fragile, however, and risks backsliding amid shifting global health priorities and constrained fiscal space. Building resilient and equitable health systems in the face of ongoing geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty and rising debt burdens, climate shocks, pandemic threats, and demographic and epidemiological shifts will require stronger political commitment and more sustainable financing.

¹ World Bank; World Health Organization. *Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2025 Global Monitoring Report* (December 2025), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099819212012531233>

² UHC2030, *2025 ACT for UHC Report* (December 2025), <https://www.uhc2030.org/2025-act-for-uhc-report/>.

This begins with a focus on reducing reliance on out-of-pocket (OOP) payments, strengthening primary healthcare (PHC) as the foundation of integrated service delivery, and investing in a supported, skilled, and equitably distributed health and care workforce. It also requires harnessing digital technologies, strengthening health information and disease surveillance systems, and institutionalizing social participation to build trust, improve accountability and inform more equitable policies. Routine tracking of health expenditure through national health accounts is central to these efforts, generating evidence to guide policy and investment decisions, strengthen health system performance, assess the adequacy and equity of resource allocation, and monitor progress towards UHC and health security. Together, these investments can improve access to quality essential health services and financial protection, while strengthening health systems' ability to maintain essential services during crises and to anticipate, detect, withstand, respond to, and recover from health emergencies. Ultimately, UHC is achieved when health services remain accessible and affordable for everyone, in times of both calm and crisis.

The 2027 HLM on UHC provides an important opportunity to accelerate action during the final years of the SDG implementation period, and to firmly embed this agenda within a global health governance and finance landscape undergoing profound change. This annual ministerial event will informally kick off preparations for the HLM by bringing together leaders to discuss how to improve the accessibility and affordability of health services through policies and systems that leave no one behind. Building on recent global commitments on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPPR), the meeting will highlight how investing in UHC and resilient health systems can strengthen countries' capacity to meet evolving health needs and withstand shocks. On the road to 2027, participants at this gathering will help shape a clear path forward to galvanizing political will and sustaining action on health for all through 2030 and beyond.

OBJECTIVES

- Take stock of progress, gaps and challenges towards implementing commitments made in the political declaration of the 2023 HLM on UHC.
- Share latest evidence, data, policy recommendations and lessons learned, including examples of successful national reforms that strengthen resilient health systems while advancing health equity and sustainability.
- Identify key policy levers and early priorities for the 2027 UHC HLM to catalyze action in an evolving governance and health financing landscape, with a focus on S.A.F.E. financing – **S**ustainability, **A**dequacy, **F**airness, and **E**fficiency – for UHC.
- Discuss how key intergovernmental agreements, including the political declarations of recent health-related UN HLMs and the 2025 WHA resolution on strengthening health financing globally, can be leveraged to strengthen domestic financing and reinforce the case for investing in core health system functions.

RUN OF SHOW

1:15 – 1:40	Opening Segment	
5 min.	Buffer	
4 min.	Dr. Magda Robalo , Co-chair of UHC2030 Steering Committee	Welcome remarks from moderator and housekeeping
4 min.	H.E. Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu , Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan	Opening remarks from Co-chair
4 min.	H.E. Mr. Mikheil Sarjveladze , Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Georgia	Opening remarks from Co-chair
4 min.	H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi , Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand	Opening remarks from Co-chair
4 min.	Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus , Director-General, World Health Organization (TBC)	Scene setting remarks
1:40 – 1:50	Member State perspectives <i>High-level interventions from Member States to share experiences/national reforms</i>	
3 min.	Hon. Mr. Kwabena Mintah Akandoh , Minister of Health, Ghana	Member State reforms/initiatives
3 min.	H.E. Ms. Mónica García Gómez , Minister of Health, Spain	Member State reforms/initiatives
3 min.	Hon. Dr. Frank Anthony , Minister of Health, Guyana	Member State reforms/initiatives
1:50 – 2:10	Panel discussion <i>Thematic discussion with senior representatives of respective constituencies</i>	
3 min.	Dr. John-Arne Røttingen , CEO, Wellcome Trust	Guiding question: Recent global health architecture reform efforts are starting to align around a decentralized, country-driven global health system. As UHC financing conversations push hard on domestic resource mobilization and country ownership, that conversation tends to focus mainly on raising more tax revenue. But you've pointed to other levers – solidarity taxes, debt relief,

		curbing illicit financial flows – that could meaningfully expand countries' fiscal space. What would it take to bring these mechanisms into mainstream UHC financing conversations and, ultimately, into action?
3 min.	Dr. Vanessa Kerry , WHO DG Special Envoy for Health Resilience & CEO of Seed Global Health	Guiding question: If we expand the financing envelope, the next question is how to make those resources work better for countries. How can we achieve greater coherence and alignment across domestic and international financing around country-led priorities, so that investments in UHC, PHC and resilience reinforce one another?
3 min.	Dr. Cecilia Mundaca Shah , Vice President of Global Health Strategy, UN Foundation	Guiding question: The PPPR political declaration explicitly anchors preparedness infrastructure in UHC and primary healthcare. How can the 2027 HLM on UHC carry that integration from language into practice – particularly so that health workforce and surveillance assets can be planned and financed as core UHC infrastructure, not a parallel track?
3 min.	Ms. Katie Dain , CEO of NCD Alliance, Representative of the Coalition of Partnerships for UHC and Global Health	Guiding question: What lessons can we take from disease-specific programmes to build more integrated, people-centred health systems that remain responsive to people's specific health needs across the life course, while reducing fragmentation, using resources more efficiently?
3 min.	Ms. Yolanda Grace Tembo , UNICEF Youth Advocate	Guiding question: Young people are often at the forefront of how people use technology, access information and engage with services. What opportunities can we unlock to reimagine how health systems deliver care, engage communities and build trust – and make UHC a transformative agenda for health systems, rather than simply an expansion of existing models?

2:10 – 2:22	Interactive discussion <i>Interventions from member states and other participants subject to protocol and time permitting (2 min. each)</i>	
	Expressions of interest: • Ms. Punya Salila Srivastava, Vice Minister, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India • Dr. István Lakatos, Deputy State Secretary for International Cooperation, Hungary • Dr. Line Vold, Director General, Department of Public Health, Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services • Ambassador Alejandra Solano Cabalceta, Director General for Foreign Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica • Mr Jérôme Weinbach, Deputy Delegate for European and International Affairs at the French Ministry of Health • UNFPA Executive Director • Gavi	
2:22 – 2:30	Closing Segment	
5 min.	Lightning round with all panelists (1 min. each for response)	Guiding question: If you could recommend one priority or commitment for Member States to include in the 2027 UHC Political Declaration to accelerate progress towards UHC, what would it be?
3 min.	Dr. Magda Robalo , Co-chair of UHC2030 Steering Committee	Closing remarks & announcement of 2026 UHC Day theme

ACCESS & SECURITY

All attendees without a valid UN ground pass must have a Special Event Ticket (SET) or secondary pass to enter.

Special Event Tickets / Secondary Passes

Those requiring a SET or secondary pass to access the UN can collect their ticket(s) at the registration table outside of One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (885 2nd Avenue, intersection of 47th Street and 2nd Ave) at the following time:

- Wednesday, 23 September, from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Please note that a valid government-issued ID will be required to collect tickets. If you are unable to collect your pass at the designated time, please contact Eva Kiegele (WHO) to coordinate an alternate time.

Security Checkpoints *(map attached below)*

There are two security checkpoints before entering the UN Headquarters Complex:

1. 46th St and 2nd Ave
2. 47th St and 1st Ave

A SET and matching valid government-issued ID must be presented at the security checkpoints. Please note that large bags will not be permitted.

Arrival

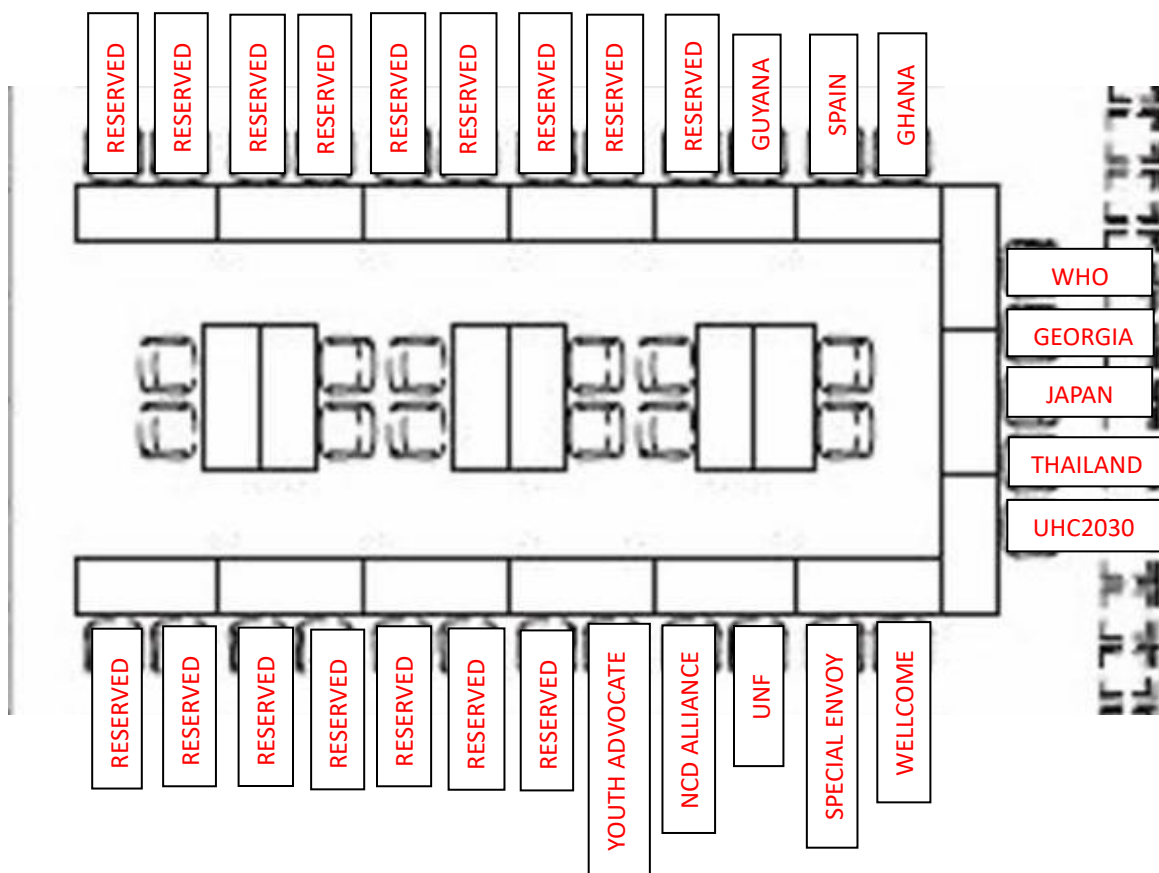
Panelists are requested to arrive in Conference Room 11 by **no later than 1:00 pm**. *It is recommended to arrive at UN Headquarters 45 minutes – 1 hour before the start of the event as the security screening might be lengthy.*

A representative for the event will be available at the 46th St/2nd Ave security checkpoint at **12:30 pm** to escort panelists to the conference room.

Location *(map attached below)*

Conference Room 11 is located on the **First Basement Level (1B)** of the Conference Building. From the entrance to the UN, guests will proceed down the stairs next to the Mandela statue to level 1B. From there, guests will pass through the security checkpoint next to the UN Bookstore. After passing that checkpoint, proceed up the hallway and Conference 11 will be on the left.

SEATING ARRANGEMENT (CONFERENCE ROOM 11)



MAPS

Pedestrian Access



Security Screening Checkpoints



UNHQ Map (Level 1B)

