MANILA COMMUNIQUE

We, Parliamentarians, participants of the Fourth Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarian Forum on Global Health (the Forum), jointly chaired by the respective chairs of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography and House of Representatives Committee on Health of the Republic of the Philippines in Manila, the Philippines, from 23 to 24 August 2018;

We, Parliamentarians, delegates from 21 countries, including the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cook Islands, Republic of Fiji, Japan, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Republic of Nauru, Republic of Palau, Republic of the Philippines, Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Thailand, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Republic of Vanuatu, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam:

1. Reaffirming our collective and continuing commitment to prioritize, promote and protect the health and well-being of all people, while leaving no one behind, through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs);

2. Concerned that despite significant gains in health across the Asia-Pacific region, progress is uneven and people still suffer from various threats to health that are rooted in social, economic, environmental, commercial and other determinants of health;

3. Acknowledging that advances in the health of populations must necessarily include those who are marginalized or vulnerable, particularly the poor, women and children, people with disabilities, older people, migrants, refugees and the geographically isolated;

4. Considering that Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is an enumerated SDG target, an efficient and equitable platform to achieve health across the SDGs, and an effective engine of sustainable development overall;

5. Recognizing that UHC is a viable goal for our countries to achieve so that all people can access and afford quality health services across the full spectrum of care, including health promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care;

6. Agreeing that countries will need a strong primary health care system that delivers continuous integrated people-centred health services across the life course to advance UHC;

7. Understanding that health is everyone’s business and that a whole-of-society approach to health system strengthening is needed to advance UHC and achieve health in the SDGs;

8. Confirming that UHC will only be possible with sustainable financing that generates revenues from domestic sources;

9. Confirming also that funding mechanisms can also promote health by discouraging unhealthy behaviours, such as tobacco use, excess sugar consumption, and the harmful use of alcohol;
10. **Emphasizing** that strategies to attain UHC require the effective stewardship of the health system, as well as the prevention and management of public health risks;

11. **Acknowledging** the critical role of local governments to adapt and implement health measures that further advance national health mandates for UHC, as exemplified by the commendable Learning Barangay Health Day, University Town initiative, and smoke-free tobacco regulations in the City of Balanga, Province of Bataan, Republic of the Philippines; and

12. **Accepting** that parliamentarians have the power to make laws and hold governments to account, and these powers should be used to advance UHC and achieve health in the SDGs.

**Acknowledge that the Fourth Meeting met its objectives:**

1. To review progress since the Third Meeting of the Forum towards achieving health in the SDGs;

2. To share country experiences in developing, implementing, and evaluating health policies for UHC, including through financing and regulation; and

3. To discuss next steps for the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarian Forum on Global Health.

**Express appreciation to:**

1. The chairs of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography and the House of Representatives Committee on Health of the Republic of the Philippines for their leadership and passion in co-chairing the Fourth Meeting as a demonstration of the country’s commitment to the Forum as a platform for regional collaboration among parliaments across the Asia-Pacific region;

2. The Department of Health of the Republic of the Philippines for technical and administratve support in organizing the Fourth Meeting, including to coordinate local arrangements and facilitate cooperation between all organizing partners;

3. The Province of Bataan and its municipalities, especially the City of Balanga, as well as Bataan General Hospital, for their warmth and generosity in hosting the site visit for the Fourth Meeting, allowing members of the Forum to witness coordinated local governance for health in action and experience local culture; and

4. The World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific and the WHO Representative Office for the Philippines for overall coordination of the Fourth Meeting, for on-going secretariat support to the Forum, and for on-going technical assistance to Member States, including the Republic of the Philippines, towards advancing UHC and achieving health in the SDGs.

**Urge our fellow Parliamentarians to:**

1. **Enact**, according to national needs and capacities, legislations that shall strengthen health governance, promote the right to health, including mental health, improve service delivery, prevent and manage public health risk, as well as address the social determinants of health in order to advance UHC and achieve SDGs on health;

2. **Approve** budgets and mobilize sustainable resources for essential health services to advance UHC that includes equitable access and sustainable health outcomes;

3. **Adopt** fiscal measures that will also promote health by discouraging unhealthy behaviours, such as tobacco use, excess sugar consumption and harmful use of alcohol, among others;
4. Exercise parliamentary powers of oversight during the implementation of all health programmes in order to maintain a coherent operational framework anchored on UHC;

5. Encourage the active participation of various constituencies, communities, and civil society at all levels, as well as the private sector, while protecting against conflicts of interest; in health planning and decision-making processes for UHC; and

6. Continue engaging in international partnerships, including through the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarian Forum on Global Health, to share experiences between countries towards achieving health in the SDGs, to foster collaboration in addressing cross-border health issues, and to raise awareness of global health in the development of international health mandates.

Request the Secretariat to:

1. Continue supporting the further development of the Forum, as appropriate, in consultation with the Executive Committee;

2. Coordinate with the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji to organize and chair the fifth meeting of the Forum in 2019;

3. Coordinate with the National Health Insurance Service of the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the National Assembly, to develop and deliver the Executive Leadership Course on Sustainable Health Financing in 2019;

4. Facilitate dialogue and learning between Forum members through country study groups on priority health issues, as appropriate;

5. Develop and maintain a platform to enable on-going communications and sharing of resources between Forum members and the Secretariat; and

6. Continue supporting Member States, upon request and as appropriate, to achieve health in the SDGs, including through technical assistance in securing sustainable financing and strengthening legal frameworks for UHC.

Adopt:

This Manila Communique on 24 August 2018 in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, as the outcome statement of the Fourth Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarian Forum on Global Health.