

1. Universal Health Coverage: Moving Towards Better Health

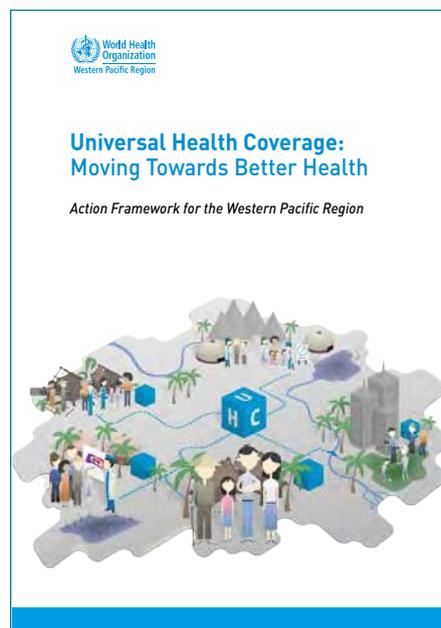
At the sixty-sixth session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in October 2015, Member States adopted a resolution on UHC (WPR/RC66.R2) and endorsed *Universal Health Coverage: Moving Towards Better Health* – an action framework that guides Member States in accelerating progress towards UHC and the health-related SDGs. As UHC envisions all people having quality health services without suffering financial hardship, it serves as the major pathway to equitable and sustainable health outcomes and resilient health systems.

UHC is a target of the SDGs and provides the platform for bringing different health and development efforts together. Government leadership is fundamental to progressing towards, establishing and steering the vision for health sector development. It is also essential in providing sufficient financial and human resources and in efforts promoting equity-focused approaches that address the social determinants of health.

The UHC action framework takes a comprehensive, whole-of-system approach to support Member States to develop their own UHC road maps by tailoring a group of interconnected actions as part of their national health policy and planning processes. The 15 action domains identified in the framework are highlighted within five interlinked attributes of a high-performing health system: quality, efficiency, equity, accountabil-

ity and resilience. These attributes are reflected in health policy objectives across the Western Pacific Region, and include suggested actions that reflect country, regional and global experiences.

Based on their unique country context, Member States are encouraged to select a combination of actions that best address their priorities and population health needs and incorporate them in their health policies and strategies and health sector reform. Actions do not have to be undertaken all at once.



The Regional Committee for the Western Pacific endorsed the action framework on universal health coverage in October 2015.

In this way, Member States at all levels of development can take actions to advance UHC. There is no one-size-fits-all formula for achieving UHC, as health systems necessarily reflect their national social, economic, historical and political contexts and priorities. In deciding which actions to take, countries may consider the connections between different actions and how they reinforce one another.

In developing its own road map, each Member State should assess its progress towards UHC, identify gaps, select entry points and opportunities for change, cultivate an enabling environment for intersectoral collaboration across various levels of government and for stakeholder engagement, ensure financial sustainability, and continue to monitor and evaluate progress.

Member States have made significant health gains over the past decade, but they face complex new challenges: changing demographic and epidemiological profiles, reduced donor funding, emerging diseases, increasing demands for more and higher-quality health services, among others. With the UHC action framework, WHO is committed to support Member States in realizing the vision of UHC. Next steps include establishing a regional platform for monitoring progress, sharing experiences and good practices and exploring solutions in moving towards UHC. ■