3. Information and evidence

Governance for UHC requires engagement of multiple sectors and stakeholders on the basis of information and evidence. To enable countries to track progress and determine priority areas for action, WHO developed SDG-UHC country profiles. These country profiles brought together data on progress towards SDGs and UHC to help governments identify successes and prioritize actions.

The data highlighted challenges and opportunities. Up to half the population in some countries in Asia and the Pacific lack essential health services. Access to immunization and maternal and child health services was better than other types of health services. Areas for improvement were identified, including detecting and treating infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and HIV, and preventing and treating noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

NCDs remain the number one cause of premature death in the Region. Strong health systems are needed to prevent these diseases and reverse the NCD epidemic, and better support those already managing these conditions. WHO will continue to work with Member States to collect more detailed disaggregated data to ensure no one is left behind.

WHO also supported Member States to establish or strengthen knowledge transfer mechanisms to promote evidence-informed health policies and health-care delivery. The Asia-Pacific Pathway to Universal Health Care Workshop, a side event of the UHC Forum in Tokyo in December 2017, brought together health leaders from government, public health and health systems academics, experts from the WHO collaborating centres, WHO Western Pacific Region UHC Technical Advisory Group members, development partners, and civil society organizations to reflect on pathways Asia-Pacific countries have followed to UHC. Participants agreed that strong community engagement can strengthen health system equity, quality and accountability, as well as reduce demand-side barriers to access, especially for disadvantaged groups.

Noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes remain the number one cause of premature death in the Region. A health worker conducts blood sugar testing at Princess Margaret Hospital in Tuvalu.