
DRAFT Declaration
Second International Conference on Primary Health Care:
Towards Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals

Astana, Kazakhstan 25-26 October 2018

Forty years ago, a generation of leaders expressed their commitment to achieve health for all through primary health care in the Declaration of Alma-Ata. Since then, numerous summits, global, regional, and national conferences have reiterated those commitments; however, the implementation of primary health care has been insufficient and uneven among and within countries. As a result the global community has yet to deliver health for all.

Today, the need for people-centred primary health care is greater than at any time in history. We are facing (1) demographic and social change with ageing populations, urbanization, globalization, and rising inequities; (2) epidemiological transitions including the rise of chronic disease, non-communicable diseases, mental health and multimorbidity – while coping with the unfinished needs of maternal and child health, communicable diseases and increasing antimicrobial resistance; (3) complex emergencies, including epidemics, war and violence and the effects of climate change, all resulting in the largest population migrations in history; (4) increasingly complex health systems and rising costs; (5) increasing citizen voice, social participation and rising expectations; and (6) an enlarging role of the private sector, innovation, the technological revolution and information age in health service delivery. No nation will be able to meet these challenges without strong commitments to primary health care and universal health coverage.

We, the participants of the Second International Conference on Primary Health Care, express our intention to be the generation to succeed in achieving health for all. We renew our commitment to the values and principles of the Declaration of Alma-Ata, particularly to health as a human right, social justice, solidarity, and intersectoral action, recognizing that health is an indispensable engine of development, security and peace. **We commit to taking bold and tangible steps to address the health challenges of the 21st century. We hereby launch a global movement in pursuit of universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that primary health care is at the core of this movement.**

We will act immediately on this Declaration in coordination with the World Health Organization and UNICEF, engaging with leaders and all relevant sectors of Government, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and donors, academia, civil society and the private sector to carry this movement forward. We will use the coming year to ensure that the UNGA High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in 2019 in New York will build on this momentum. Together we will achieve health for all, leaving no one behind.

I. Primary health care is essential to improve health:

Achieving health for all is dependent upon involving the whole of society in the development process, decisive action on all determinants of health, an inclusive and intersectoral approach, and a people-centred health system. Decades of evidence demonstrate that health systems based on primary health care provide better population and individual health. Countries that successfully implement quality primary health care reap health benefits beyond what would be expected for their level of development.

II. Primary health care is essential to the success of and sustainability of health systems:

Health systems focused on quality primary health care improve health equity, coverage of services, cost-effectiveness and efficiency, and people's experience of care compared with those that over emphasize specialty care. Primary health care is critical to health security and emergency preparedness. For universal health coverage to be effective and sustainable, health services must be organized in an integrated fashion, with quality primary health care delivering the vast majority of care, thus stewarding critical health resources and enabling progressive realization of coverage. Progress requires a reorientation of health systems away from overemphasis on

curative care, disease-specific programs, highly-specialised services, and commercialization. The unregulated expansion of the private sector, fragmentation of services, less access to care for those who need it most, rising costs and over-medicalization **must be reversed**.

III. Primary health care is essential to achieving universal health coverage and Sustainable Development Goals:

The ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 depends on the political will to strengthen a primary health care approach in all countries. The interrelated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals highlights that health and well-being are both products of and essential elements for sustainable development. Universal health coverage based on primary health care is a critical element for the reduction of poverty, improved nutrition, education, gender equality and empowerment, productive employment and economic growth, healthy cities and settlements. The role of primary health care in promoting intersectoral action is essential to the attainment of these interdependent goals. In addition, a primary health care approach is essential to improving health equity and leaving no one behind.

As a movement we affirm that the need to strengthen primary health care, including community and facility based services, is relevant to all countries. While the operationalization must be context specific, the attributes of high-quality primary health care, fit for the 21st century, are universal: (1) it addresses the health problems of individuals in the context of their family circumstances, their social and cultural networks, and life in the local community (2) it is geographically and financially accessible, making it people's first access point to the health system for most needs; (3) it provides context-appropriate comprehensive care for the majority of health needs people experience throughout their lives; (4) it is the foundation to integrated service delivery, coordinating with other levels of services and other sectors including specialized care, acute inpatient care, long term care facilities, traditional and complementary medicine, public health and social services; (5) it is continuous, enabling enduring and empowering relationships between people and their providers and promoting self-care; (6) and it is people-centred, respectful of and responsive to individual and social preferences, needs, goals and values, and sees the individual as a whole, within their biological, psychological, and community context.

- I. Governments, in line with national priorities and context, commit to:
 - a. Governance that appropriately prioritizes and resources primary health care; protection of health and wellbeing through intersectoral action; empowerment and participation by all people and communities in their health, in the governance of health care, and in the planning, development, and management of health systems and services; and the development of a work plan for strengthening primary health care as a central component of appropriately financed national and sub-national health policies, strategies and plans.
 - b. Mobilizing domestic financing and better use of available resources to ensure adequate financial investment in health, and in particular, to primary health care; continuing the path toward universal health coverage, guaranteeing entitlement to a context-appropriate, comprehensive package of services and ensuring financial protection; engaging and appropriately regulating the private sector primary health care service delivery; and ensuring access to and promoting the appropriate use of medicines and technology in primary health care.
 - c. Training, recruitment and retention of a competent health workforce for primary health care, for work within facilities and communities, including interdisciplinary teams with an appropriate skill mix.
 - d. Further developing health information systems within primary care, including integrated, individual patient records and patient registries, to enable continuity and coordination of care, continuous quality improvement and quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, assessment of equity and accountability;
 - e. Devoting appropriate resources to research, knowledge management and evaluation of primary health care and promoting scale up of effective strategies.
- II. People, including civil society, commit to:
 - a. capitalize on the opportunities, knowledge, skills and resources to be articulate and empowered self-carers, informal carers, and co-producers of health;

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- b. use their voice to fulfill their role in social accountability and participatory governance of health services including their role in national and sub-national policy formulation and planning; and
 - c. utilize, demand and advocate for high-quality primary health care within a transformed health system.
- III. The international community, including WHO and UNICEF as well as other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral funding agencies and donors pledge to support the implementation of this Declaration according to their comparative advantages by:
- a. realigning their priorities, technical and financial support around national policies, strategies and plans, thus ensuring effective allocation of sufficient resources to country efforts towards universal health coverage and people-centered health systems based on primary health care, consistent with this Declaration and the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals,
 - b. organising the monitoring and accountability for this realignment in accordance with the UHC2030 framework;
 - c. co-developing a series of primary health care focused programs and projects, bringing together international actors to jointly support the development of global goods and provide technical support to countries regarding the commitments of this Declaration; and
 - d. organizing a coordinating mechanism for the systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of this Declaration including application of the strategy for monitoring and evaluation of primary health care at national and sub-national and service delivery level as a compliment to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout the world, people envision a better future for themselves and for their children, in peace, prosperity, and social justice. Along with the assurance of financial coverage, primary health care is key to the attainment, by all people, of a level of health necessary to realize those aspirations.