

Summary report on the

Preparatory meeting on a roadmap for universal health coverage in Africa

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25 June 2015



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

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1. Introduction

WHO and the World Bank, in collaboration with the Government of Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Government of Kenya, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the African Development Bank are organizing a high-level side event on universal health coverage in Africa to take place during the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD6), scheduled to take place from 27 to 28 August 2016, in Nairobi, Kenya.

The high-level side event will share global best practice in moving towards universal health coverage with lessons for African countries. A framework for action for universal health coverage in Africa will be presented at a high-level round table event. The framework will delineate concrete actions for Member States to pursue universal health coverage in its three dimensions, while paying special attention to health security in the aftermath of the Ebola crisis. In addition, a description of the support to be provided by development partners is to be specified.

To prepare for this event, a preparatory meeting was organized to:

- discuss the structure and content of the framework for developing national roadmaps for universal health coverage in Africa;
- coordinate preparations for the high-level side event with concerned development partners and discuss the division of labour to finalize the framework;
- agree on administrative arrangements, including targeted audience, agenda and invitation modalities;
- review the draft Nairobi Declaration on “Advancing Africa’s sustainable development”; and
- discuss incorporation of the outcomes of the high-level side event.

The preparatory meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss and collect input to revise the “Framework for action on advancing universal health coverage in the Eastern Mediterranean Region”.

Staff from WHO headquarters and the regional offices for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean and representatives of the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, the African Development Bank, and other United Nations agencies, including UNDP and UNICEF, attended the meeting.

2. Summary of discussions

For the first time the Tokyo International Conference on African Development is taking place in Africa. Two side meetings are planned on universal health coverage in Africa proposed by the World Bank/WHO and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. This is in addition to a thematic session on universal health coverage, which is planned to take place on Day 1 of the Conference (27 August 2016).

Several documents have been produced in the past on universal health coverage and on the status of, and challenges for, universal health coverage in Africa. Any additional document needs to be tailored to the audience of the TICAD6 – heads of state and ministers of foreign affairs. The document needs to be concise, specific, strategic and focused.

In framing a vision and roadmap for universal health coverage, consideration needs to be given to the paradigm shift following adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where focus of the global development agenda has changed from being aid-focused and aid-driven, as it was under the Millennium Development Goals, to one that gives prominence to national responsibility for equity with enhanced ownership – calling for increased reliance on domestic resources.

Developing a regional roadmap requires regional legitimacy. It is therefore preferable that what is developed and presented provides direction for a way forward and the process for developing national universal health coverage roadmaps. This has been the experience of WHO in developing regional frameworks for action, which not only provide clarity on the way forward but lay out concrete actions.

The high-level side event needs to highlight existing problems and the actions needed to address these, in addition to identifying available support. The focus of the high-level side event will be on:

- conducting high-level advocacy by focusing on values and the need for action to make progress on existing commitments in the Region;
- increasing commitment to universal health coverage by focusing on political processes;
- outlining broad strategic directions; and
- suggesting concrete actions.

Below is the summary of the main points discussed during the meeting and the identified next steps.

Universal health coverage in Africa

The framework document needs to be concise and focused and contain the key messages which one would like to relay to high-level policy-makers relating to policies, commitments and actions.

It needs to provide broad directions for countries to develop their own roadmaps.

The framework will be accompanied by a 5–7 page document that provides highlights on where African countries are in regard to the

three dimensions of universal health coverage and health security. It is preferred that the focus is on the “how” rather than the “what” with key policy directions to accelerate progress on universal health coverage. Furthermore, the document would illustrate the counterfactual of what would happen if no action is taken now.

A preliminary outline of the document would be based on:

- developing an effective governance structure for universal health coverage (multisectorality; voice and societal dialogue; data and information);
- financing and financial protection (health care financing, financial risk protection);
- service coverage (including family practice/people centred integrated health services);
- population coverage (vulnerable populations);
- preparedness and response (health security and health system resilience).

The document would identify opportunities and provide concrete key messages on why is it important for heads of state to focus on universal health coverage. Reference would need to be made to:

- universal health coverage and its linkage with the SDGs, the Group of Seven (G7), Tunis Declaration, Luanda Declaration, and health security preparedness;
- weak health systems which impede development;
- weak health systems which slow progress towards universal health coverage;
- universal health coverage as part of national health policies, strategies, and plans.

It is proposed that a drafting team (from WHO headquarters, regional offices for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, the World Bank, Government of Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency, African Development Bank, UNICEF) is assigned to prepare a first draft of the document and framework with the following timeline:

- First draft by 15 July 2016
- Internal and peer reviewing by 31 July 2016
- Final draft 7 August 2016.

Preparatory arrangements, including division of labour

Discussion with the Global Fund took place on the timing of the event, their proposed session, venue, and invitation modalities. The Japan International Cooperation Agency will confirm the date and venue.

Administrative arrangements, including targeted audience and invitation modalities

The high-level side event is proposed to take place on 26 August 2016 at 15:00–17:00 or 16:00–18:00. However, discussion is still under way with the Global Fund on whether a universal health coverage session on 27 August 2016 should be organized or the Global Fund should join the side event of 26 August.

It is expected that the number of participants will be around 150 people – two people per delegation: one health representative and one head of state representative.

Invitations will be sent by the Government of Kenya on behalf of the organizers.

Five discussants will be invited to share views on the challenges to implementing the framework and moving forward. It is suggested to include speakers from:

- Ethiopia – human resources for health and package of services and efficiency (good health at low cost)
- Ghana – national health information systems
- Tunisia – societal dialogue
- Senegal – stunting
- Kenya – (to be determined), as hosting country

The World Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency will follow up with the Government of Kenya on the next steps. WHO and the World Bank will follow up on selection of speakers.

3. Way forward

The draft Nairobi Declaration on “Advancing Africa’s sustainable development” has already been prepared. Consolidated comments were previously provided by experts from WHO headquarters and regional offices for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, UNICEF and other partners. Comments were reviewed during a recent senior official meeting and a ministerial meeting in Gambia. Incorporation of the contributions of WHO and UNICEF was limited and implementation of further amendments does not appear possible at this stage although there remains a possibility to make additions to the section on implementation measures. The Japan International Cooperation Agency will follow up with the secretariat of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development to examine the possibility of including these additions and the World Bank will look into identifying the proper channels to do so.

The image features a minimalist, abstract design composed of several rectangular blocks. A large teal block occupies the top right and bottom right portions. A grey block is positioned in the top left. A horizontal grey band runs across the middle. A dark grey block is located in the bottom left. The bottom of the image is a solid grey bar containing white text.

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