

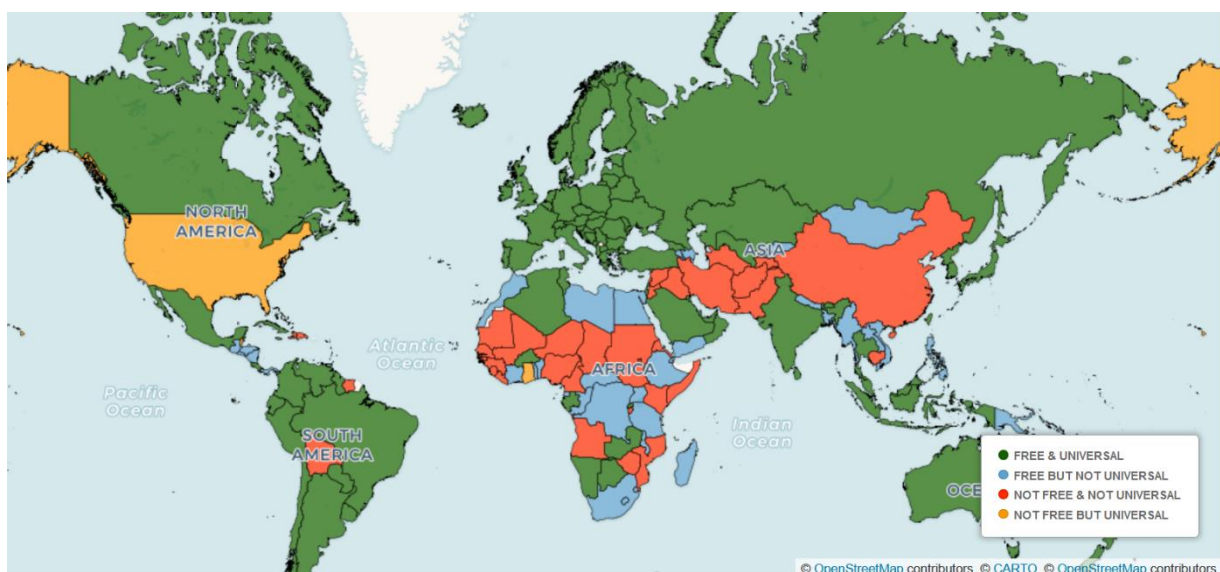
Forum:	Security Council
Issue:	Social protection in times of crisis: the urgency of achieving universal health coverage
Student officer:	Josefine Bühler
Position:	Vice President of the Security Council
Mail:	emma.buehler@gym-meiendorf.de

Description of the issue:

Universal health coverage (UHC) is inevitable and a key contributor to equity, social justice and inclusive economic growth. UHC contributes to the broader human rights agenda and more importantly tackles the right to health in particular.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) at least half the world's population is still missing out on essential health care services and almost 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty by out-of-pocket health expenses every year.

There are great disparities among the member states, concerning health care systems in general, but also health services and facilities provided for citizens, providing both free and universal health care, either of them or none at all:





UHC means that all people and communities receive the quality health service they need, without financial hardship. Financial issues can easily occur when health care services are defrayed by merely the diseased person or family members without financial aid due to out-of-pocket payments or loss of income when a household member falls sick. The social stratum, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, sex or sexuality should never interfere with health care, neither should nationality or place of birth be an issue at any point when receiving health care. Everyone should be able to obtain health care services without suffering financially due to occurring costs for e.g. medicine, doctors, etc. Member states are endeavored to safeguard all citizens from public health risks and urgently eliminate impoverishment caused by illness, inequalities and disparities.

UHC is inevitable to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) developed and set by the UN Member states to be realized by 2030. Every nation is called upon to work towards these goals for a better and more sustainable future for everyone, addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The different areas these goals aim towards are strongly intertwined with each other, universal health coverage connecting and affecting a lot of them.

Covid-19 has confronted every country with challenges and problems no one has ever faced before. Hence a new situation requires new solution finding, success and failure collectively arose. Reflecting on the situation, inequality and injustice can obviously be monitored, not only nationwide within each member state but also on an international level.

To seek innovative solutions communication and seeking discussion is key – every member state of the Security Council is urged to participate determinedly.

Background information

There are barriers, preventing UHC from being introduced everywhere, including

- poor infrastructures and availability of basic amenities,
- out of pocket payments and expenditures for indispensable health services, facilities, etc.,
- shortages and maldistribution of qualified health workers,
- prohibitively expensive good quality medicines and medical products,
- low access to digital health and innovative technologies, among others.

These barriers can be eliminated with each specific solutions that lead to UHC and additionally boost the economy and have a main impact on the SDGs, e.g. Goal 1 – “end poverty”.

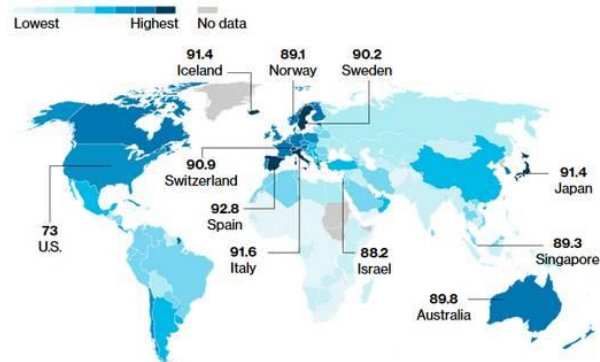
For a country or community to achieve UHC there are several factors which ought to be in place, including

- an organized, efficient and well-run health system. This should be implemented in order to meet elementary health needs and cover prioritized health services (including services for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, noncommunicable disease, maternal and child health). A basic health level for citizens is to be brought to the people by informing and encouraging them to stay healthy and promoting a healthy and prosperous lifestyle to prevent illness. It is also essential to detect health conditions early and having the capacity to also treat disease and upcoming illnesses, as well as helping patients with rehabilitation.
- Affordability in order to make health care accessible and enhance efforts for remedy. Health care service must be accessible without causing financial hardship for citizens.
- A sufficient capacity of well-trained, motivated health workers to provide the services to meet patient’s needs based on the best available evidence.

Standards between countries offering universal or free health care vary widely, including for example Norway, one of the healthiest countries in the world and the first to introduce free healthcare in 1912, but also Yemen where raging conflicts have made healthcare from international relief agencies impossible to access.

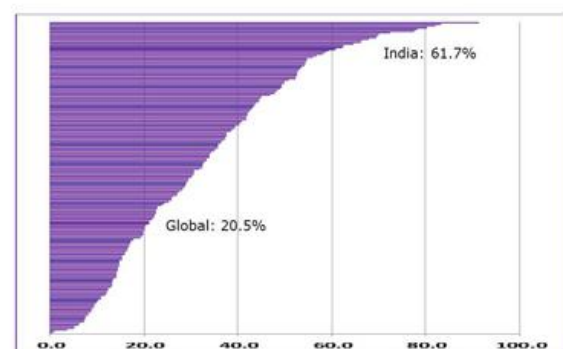
Healthiest Countries in the World

Bloomberg Global Health Index scores for 169 countries, with the top 10 plus U.S. highlighted



Sources: Bloomberg analysis of World Health Organization data; United Nations Population Division and the World Bank

Figure 1: Out-of-pocket Health Expenditure as proportion of Total Health Expenditure



Source: World Health Statistics 2013, WHO, Geneva, 190 countries

Furthermore, as shown in *Figure 1: Out-of-pocket Health Expenditure as proportion of Total Health Expenditure* out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditures vary substantially, being very high in India for example with an average of 61.7 per cent as compared to the global average of 20.5 per cent. Poverty as a result of health expenditures occurs naturally due to the lack of extensive

and adequately funded public health services and/or the absence of a public health care system in various areas in the world.

Health in reference to the Sustainable Development Goals



Graphic by WHO in: *Background paper for the regional technical consultation on: Monitoring the Health-Related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*



Historical background

On 12 December 2012, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed a resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy urging countries to accelerate progress toward universal health coverage (UHC) – the idea that everyone, everywhere should have access to quality, affordable health care

On 25 September 2015, the resolution on Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted the target of universal health coverage by 2030, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

On 12 December 2017, the UN passed a third resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy: addressing the health of the most vulnerable for an inclusive society, which called on Member States to promote and strengthen their dialogue with other stakeholders

Since 2017, 12 December has been proclaimed by the UN as International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day).

As a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), all countries have committed to try to achieve universal health coverage by 2030, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Glossary

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): goals set by the UN member states for a better and more sustainable world by 2030

Free Health Care: Free Health Care refers to a publicly funded health care that provides primary services free of charge or a nominal fee to all its citizen, with no exclusion based on wealth

Universal Health Care: Universal health care, sometimes referred to as universal health coverage, universal coverage, or universal care, usually refers to a health care system that provides healthcare and financial protection to more than 90% of the citizens of a particular country.



How to prepare as a delegate

In order to discuss the issue, all delegates should be aware of the urgency and importance of achieving universal health coverage. This way we can find innovative solutions and new approaches and ideas.

All countries should know their country's handling of keeping their citizens healthy and their approach to health care, furthermore, achieving health care for all. Research on your country's health index and measures they take to attain health, happiness and welfare among citizens. Find out about related topics such as economic circumstances and level of education in your country and be critical on current actions. As a delegate, strive to always establish new and better solutions for your country but above all for the world.

If you need more general information on the topic, the UN, WHO and UHC websites offer a wide range of information – if you are looking for specific information on your country, make sure you sources are valid and trustworthy, such as governmental websites and news articles (e.g. BBC, Fox News, etc)

UN resolutions regarding the topic

A/RES/70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

A/RES/72/139 – Global health and foreign policy: addressing the health of the most vulnerable for an inclusive society
<https://undocs.org/A/RES/72/139>

A/RES/73/131 – Scope, modalities, format and organization of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage
<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/131>

Useful links

Article on SDGs in relation to the topic of health:
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjEk>



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Official UHC website: <https://www.uhc2030.org/>

EU point of view on how to help partner countries: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/universal-health-coverage_en

Perceived challenges to achieving universal health care on the example on China (96 per cent health coverage): <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/5/e014425>

Sources

- <https://www.un.org/pga/73/event/universal-health-coverage/>
- <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news/q-a-detail/what-is-universal-health-coverage>
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/universalhealthcoverage>
- <https://in.one.un.org/task-teams/universal-health-coverage/>
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/publication/universal-health-coverage-for-inclusive-sustainable-development>
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