



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Investing in Health: The Key to Building Back Better from COVID-19 and  
Accelerating Progress for UHC and Sustainable Development

## SPEAKER'S NOTE

**Host:** World Health Organization

**Co-sponsors:** Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage and Global Health (co-chaired by Japan, Thailand and Georgia), UHC2030

**Date/Time:** July 9<sup>th</sup> 8:00-9:00 AM EST

## Connection Details

**Platform:** Zoom Webinar

**Date:** Jul 9, 2020

**Time:** 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please enter your details here to receive your personalized link to connect:

[https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_CAMHVbyHTxKS1M3ftBV7QQ](https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CAMHVbyHTxKS1M3ftBV7QQ)

*Please plan to connect 30 min. in advance of the 8:00am start time. Should you have any issues, kindly see the contact below:*

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### Test Call

**Date:** Wednesday, 8 July 2020

**Time:** 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://who.zoom.us/j/96605490205>

**Password:** Test2020#

## Background

The theme of the High Level Political Forum this year is ***"Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development"***. Achieving sustainable development is dependent on, and contributes to, a healthy population. Health is a cross-cutting issue throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – closely linked with poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality and women's empowerment, decent work and economic growth, reducing inequalities, climate change, ensuring just, peaceful and inclusive societies and building and fostering partnerships. The fact that approximately 50 SDG targets across at least 14 of the goals are critical to ensuring health and well-being, highlights the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration and leveraging shared gains across the SDGs.

**In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as a human security crisis, accelerating implementation of the *Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage* has become more essential than ever.** We are only as safe as the weakest health system. And while much progress has been made in global health, at least half of the world's population still do not receive the health services they need and about 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty each year due to out-of-pocket spending on health. Epidemiological, environmental and demographic changes challenge existing health systems, which are often underfunded, under-resourced, and/or structured around vertical programmes.

Epidemic-prone diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), Ebola, Zika, COVID-19 and others, are precursors of a new era of high-impact, potentially fast-spreading outbreaks that are more frequent and increasingly difficult to manage. Meanwhile, pandemics remain unpredictable but reoccurring events that can have serious consequences for human health and well-being worldwide. Each year, the world spends more responding to disease outbreaks and health emergencies than preparing for and preventing them. To get ahead of pandemics we must break the cycle of panic and neglect and invest in preparedness.

As we are witnessing with COVID-19, when faced with a pandemic, the burden on the health system endangers global health security and has far reaching economic, social and developmental consequences, threatening progress made on the SDGs. Universal health coverage and strong health systems, supported by sufficient financial and human resources, are a critical defence against disease outbreaks, and a necessary norm for sustaining good health outcomes. Intersectoral action for health, including investments in pandemic preparedness, enables governments to prevent and/or respond quickly and robustly to outbreaks, through targeted health sector measures rather than restrictions that can heavily disrupt economic activity.

This side event will consider critical investments needed to ensure robust and agile health systems for maximizing good health and well-being for all, including around: educating, training, employing and supporting the health workforce, role of new technologies and digital health, ensuring financial and social protection, and pandemic preparedness.

## Objectives

- Promote investments in health as a catalyst for accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs, through equity-oriented and human-rights based social protection for inclusive development, and shared economic prosperity.
- Showcase the importance of strengthened health systems amid the COVID-19 pandemic and that our response strategies must also incorporate preparedness measures for the future;
- Share best practices for responding to COVID-19 (how those who have prioritized UHC are best equipped to ensure health and security, even during outbreaks)
- Address the financial challenges and other social barriers to achieving UHC, in wake of the outbreak; proposed solutions for "building back better"
- Encourage countries to prioritize health in their VNRs, with particular regard to implementation of the Political Declaration on UHC

## PROGRAMME

### OPENING REMARKS & KEYNOTES (8:00 AM – 8:20 AM)

2 min.	H.E. Mr. Vitavas Srivihok Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome remarks and setting the scene</li> <li>• Moderate opening remarks and keynote addresses</li> </ul>
4 min.	H.E. Ms. Amina Mohammed UN Deputy Secretary-General ( <i>Video Message</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN system and multilateral response to COVID-19</li> <li>• Protecting the most vulnerable: humanitarian situations and people on the move</li> <li>• Centrality of UHC in COVID-19 response and preparedness and planned SG Policy Brief on UHC</li> <li>• Building back better to accelerate progress in the Decade of Action for the SDGs</li> </ul>
4 min.	Dr. Tedros WHO Director-General ( <i>Video Message</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief overview of COVID-19 and WHO Response</li> <li>• Highlight common challenges for health systems (e.g. continuity of essential services) that have been exposed and how nations can move forward to build resilience through investments in UHC</li> <li>• Building back better to prepare for emerging threats such as climate change and AMR</li> </ul>
4 min.	Dr. Gro Brundtland Member of the Elders; Member of the UHC Movement Political Advisory Panel, UHC2030; former Prime Minister of Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight health systems and UHC as a social contract: measures governments need to take to protect people in times of crisis.</li> <li>• Address health equity and socioeconomic determinants of health and the impact of COVID-19</li> </ul>
4 min.	Professor Keizo Takemi WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Universal Health Coverage; Member of the UHC Movement Political Advisory Panel, UHC2030 ( <i>Video message</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needed investments in UHC as the key to global health security and human security</li> <li>• How to capitalize on the current moment to reorient health systems toward UHC</li> <li>• Lessons from Japan to illustrate the importance of UHC in addressing pandemic</li> </ul>

### NATIONAL EXPERIENCES & THEMATIC DISCUSSION (8:20 AM – 8:50 AM)

1-2 min	Dr. Nata Menabde Executive Director WHO Office at the UN	Moderator
4 min.	H.E. Dr. Eteni Longondo Minister of Health, Democratic Republic of Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share national experience managing overlapping outbreaks (Ebola and COVID-19).</li> <li>• Were there any lessons learned (and concrete actions taken) from Ebola that have made the health system more prepared for responding to outbreaks?</li> <li>• Have these outbreaks driven national action on UHC?</li> </ul>
4 min.	Dr. Tamar Gabunia Deputy Minister, Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National experience on how COVID-19 challenges stimulated investments towards health systems strengthening.</li> <li>• Lessons learned about how to reprioritize between different types of health services during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond in preparation for the second wave.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of multisectorality in COVID-19 response and how this experience can enhance joint efforts in achieving UHC goals.</li> </ul>
4 min.	<b>Dr. Sakchai Kanjanawatana,</b> Secretary-General, National Health Security Office, Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share key public health measures Thailand implemented to combat COVID-19.</li> <li>What aspects of the health system were particularly agile and adaptable to combatting an outbreak effectively (e.g. health volunteer programme, social participation and partnerships)?</li> </ul>
4 min.	<b>H.E. Mr. Román Macaya Hayes</b> Executive President of the Board of Directors of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share lessons learned as a country from a region with emerging pandemic</li> <li>High-light access issues among health system strengthening efforts including patent pool initiative for medicine, vaccines and diagnostics</li> <li>Country specific experience with global implications if any</li> <li></li> </ul>
4 min.	<b>Ms. Mamta Murthi</b> VP of Human Development, World Bank Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact of COVID-19 and overview of global situation</li> <li>Highlight the costs of continuing to underinvest in health</li> <li>Key investments in health system strengthening and universal health coverage – “best buys”</li> </ul>
4 min.	<b>Dr. Roopa Dhatt,</b> Executive Director, Women in Global Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share gender impacts of COVID-19 and the specific vulnerabilities of women – e.g. VAW, SRHR, access to services, financial, health workforce</li> <li>What measures have been and need to be taken to better protect and empower women as we “build back better”?</li> </ul>

#### OPEN DISCUSSION (8:50 – 8:58 AM)

1-2 min.	<b>H.E. Mr. Kaha Imnadze</b> Permanent Representative of Georgia to the UN	<b>Moderator</b>
2 min.	<b>H.E. Mr. Agustín Santos Maraver</b> Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN	Lead discussant
6 min.	Member State interventions Q&A	

#### CLOSING (8:58 – 9:00 AM)

1-2 min.	<b>H.E. Mr. Ishikane Kimihiro</b> Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN	Closing remarks and the way forward
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