

Statement on Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Multistakeholder Hearings in preparation of the UN General Assembly High-level Meetings on Universal Health Coverage - 8-9 May 2023, United Nations

The pandemic painfully confirmed what we already knew from evidence-based international guidance: public finance is crucial for achieving UHC, equity and inclusivity, so long as it is sufficient in measure and wisely used. On that note and with a particular view on low-resource countries, we bring in three points that require systemic and unified action.

1) **Take appropriate measures to increase public finance for health**, while reducing reliance on external financing for critical health services, such as sexual and reproductive health services. Member States must acknowledge that private profit seeking capital in the healthcare system, including through blended finance, will not likely achieve the goal of reaching the furthest behind first.

2) **To expand countries' fiscal space for social spending, including for health, decisive global level action is needed against tax abuse and unsolved debt crises.** We recommend that Member States acknowledge this in the UHC Political Declaration and take steps to implement A) a UN tax framework, building on the milestone resolution on 'inclusive and effective international tax cooperation'; and B) a debt resolution framework that binds all creditors and offers comprehensive debt restructuring and cancellation to all countries in need

3) **Pursue health financing policies that are deliberately aimed at advancing equitable access for all.** Equity is hard-wired in the definition of UHC and so it should be in every country's health financing system. Member States should express their commitment to single and progressive national health financing systems, public health systems. Development cooperation and financing partners should support countries in this commitment.

Putting equitable access to health and inclusivity at the heart of decision making

In summary, Member States should put equitable access to health and inclusivity at the heart of decision making at all levels, and particularly:

- pursue an increase in public, not private, finance for health,
- show wholehearted support to UN-level cooperation on tax and debt, and
- commit to health financing systems that are designed to leave no one behind.