



Open letter to Ministers of Health

We, the co-chairs of [UHC2030](#),¹ invite you to pay utmost consideration to a critical item on the agenda of the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2024: the adoption of the resolution on [social participation for universal health coverage, health and well-being](#).

We call on you, Ministers of Health, to ensure the passage of this resolution, which would mark a significant step towards accelerating equitable progress towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030. Social participation is critical to ensure people-centered health services and build equitable and resilient health systems that respond to the needs of people and communities, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalized situations. More inclusive governance for health also provides the basis for creating trust in public health policies and programmes, which is indispensable for better outcomes during times of crisis and calm.

Governments have the primary responsibility to ensure people's health, but they alone cannot deliver health for all. Adopting a whole-of-society approach and promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation ensures the accountability and legitimacy of health systems strengthening and UHC efforts. This is why we particularly welcome the reference in the [Political Declaration](#) on UHC adopted at the United Nations (UN) High-level Meeting in September 2023 to promote social participation for meaningful engagement and representation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes.²

As you know, the global situation is dire: 4.5 billion individuals – more than half of the world's population – lack access to essential health services, and 2 billion people face financial hardship in doing so. These are not just numbers; they represent the daily struggle of billions of people around the world who are denied the right to health, well-being and dignity. This distressing state, which spans all regions and most countries, underscores the urgent need to invest in UHC and protect people against financial hardship due to out-of-pocket health costs.

This resolution on social participation, which is being presented on behalf of a cross-regional group of UN Member States, urges Member States to implement, strengthen and sustain regular

¹ UHC2030 is the global movement to build stronger health systems for UHC. It brings together diverse voices and perspectives for the common goal of achieving UHC, sustaining momentum around UHC commitments and supporting collective action and accountability. Learn more at [uhc2030.org](#).

² Paragraph 104 of the 2023 Political Declaration on UHC: Promote participatory, inclusive approaches to health governance for universal health coverage, including by exploring modalities for enhancing a meaningful whole-of-society approach and social participation, involving all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, health workers and care workers in the health sector, volunteers, civil society organizations and youth in the design, implementation and review of universal health coverage, to systematically inform decisions that affect public health, so that policies, programmes and plans better respond to individual and community health needs, while fostering trust in health systems.

and meaningful social participation in health-related decisions at all levels, taking into consideration national contexts and priorities. It urges them to do so by:³

- Strengthening public sector capacities for the design and implementation of meaningful social participation;
- Enabling equitable, diverse and inclusive participation, with a particular focus on promoting the voices of those in vulnerable and/or marginalized situations;
- Ensuring that social participation influences transparent decision-making for health across the policy cycle, at all levels of the system;
- Implementing and sustaining regular and transparent social participation using a range of mechanisms supported by public policy and legislation;
- Allocating adequate and sustainable public sector resources in support of effective social participation;
- Facilitating capacity strengthening for civil society to enable diverse, equitable, transparent and inclusive social participation; and
- Supporting related research, and piloting projects/programmes and their monitoring and evaluation to promote the implementation of social participation.

The draft resolution also includes instructions on how the World Health Organization (WHO) can best support Member States to advance social participation.

It is time to translate political commitments into action and to make health systems more resilient and equitable through a primary health care approach. UHC2030 stands ready to support Member States and all stakeholders, including civil society and communities, in their efforts to implement this important resolution. Together, let us forge a path towards a healthier, more equitable future through inclusive, responsive and effective health systems governance.

Sincerely yours,

The co-chairs of the UHC2030 Steering Committee

Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron
Co-chair until 26 April 2024

Dr. Justin Koonin
Co-chair until 26 April 2024

Dr. Pamela Cipriano
Co-chair from 26 April 2024

Dr. Magda Robalo
Co-chair from 26 April 2024

³ Operational Paragraphs 1 - 7 from the WHO Executive Board 154th Session draft resolution titled Social Participation for universal health coverage, health and well-being.