

Analysis of the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

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While marginal progress will be made, the 2023 UHC political declaration is largely a missed opportunity to expand commitments towards universal health coverage.

Most commitments are repetitive of the 2019 declaration on universal health coverage or legally and politically weak.

Illustrative list of 2023 commitments generally adopted in 2019

Commitments in the 2023 draft declaration	2023 declaration	2019 declaration
integrate traditional and complementary medicine	paragraph 52	paragraph 47
build and strengthen quality of health systems	paragraph 53	paragraph 48
routine immunization and vaccination	paragraph 56	paragraph 31
promote active and healthy lifestyles	paragraph 57	paragraph 28
promote and improve mental health	paragraph 59	paragraph 36
ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services	paragraph 62	paragraph 68
address needs of migrants, refugees, and displaced	paragraph 65	paragraph 71
generally promote access to health technologies	paragraph 69	paragraph 49
innovative incentives and financing mechanisms	paragraph 73	paragraph 52
promote transparency in the pharmaceutical market	paragraph 75	paragraph 50
“continue to support” alternative R&D incentive mechanism	paragraph 76	paragraph 53
protect data and privacy in digital health environments	paragraph 80	paragraph 66

Digital health

2019 declaration	2023 zero draft	2023 declaration	other precedents
Recognizes the need to protect privacy in digital environments	Tracks the 2019 declaration recognizing need to protect privacy	Tracks the 2019 declaration recognizing need to protect privacy	All rights and principles should be protected online, including non-discrimination (e.g., A/RES/77/211)

Delinkage incentive models

2019 declaration	2023 zero draft	2023 declaration	other precedents
Committed to “continue to support” incentive mechanisms that separate R&D costs from prices	Tracked the 2019 declaration commitment to “continue to support” incentive mechanisms that separate R&D costs from prices	Tracked the 2019 declaration commitment to “continue to support” incentive mechanisms that separate R&D costs from prices	In addition to “support”, other international precedents have called for collaboration on incentive mechanisms that separate R&D costs from prices (e.g., A/HRC/RES/50/13)

Key and vulnerable populations

2019 declaration	2023 zero draft	2023 declaration	other precedents
<p>“children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants”</p>	<p>“women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, Indigenous Peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants”</p>	<p>“women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, People of African Descent, Indigenous Peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, and those living in poverty and extreme poverty in both urban and rural areas, people living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing”</p>	<p>Other precedents have recognized a larger list of key and vulnerable populations.</p> <p>For instance: transgender people, sex workers, people in prisons, people who use drugs (e.g., A/RES/75/284 and A-HRC-41-27)</p>

Technology transfer

2019 declaration	2023 zero draft	2023 declaration	other precedents
Reaffirmed the right to use TRIPS flexibilities to facilitate access to health technologies	Commitments to promote technology transfer “where possible” when public funding is invested and “on mutually agreed terms”	Commitments to promote technology transfer “where possible” when public funding is invested and “on mutually agreed terms”	Although enforcement has been a failure, article 66.2 of the TRIPS agreements include mandatory (“shall”) obligations requiring developed countries to provide incentives for technology transfer

Local and regional manufacturing

2019 declaration	2023 zero draft	2023 declaration	other precedents
Reaffirmed the right to use TRIPS flexibilities to facilitate access to health technologies	“Acknowledge the need to increasingly support developing countries in building expertise to strengthen local and regional production”	“Recognize the need to support developing countries to build expertise and strengthen local and regional production”	Other precedents including A/RES/74/2 and A/RES/76/257 have adopted similar statements recognizing the need to support local and regional manufacturing.