

Concept Note

Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage and Global Health

Background: Universal Health Coverage (UHC) has galvanized significant political movement in the past few years. The UN General Assembly resolution *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* states that in order “to promote physical and mental health and well-being, and to extend life expectancy for all, we must achieve universal health coverage and access to quality healthcare.” In this connection, the UN Member States agreed to establish the 12th of December as International UHC Day, as well as to hold a UN High-level Meeting on UHC (HLM-UHC), at which the Member States agreed to a landmark Political Declaration on UHC (A/RES/74/2). In addition, UHC Champions established the International Health Partnership for UHC 2030 (UHC2030), a multi-stakeholder platform to build stronger health systems toward UHC by 2030. UHC can serve as a cornerstone to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Aim: The Group of Friends of UHC will serve as an informal platform for UN Member States to exchange information on events and initiatives worldwide and at the UN that seek to support and advocate for achieving UHC by 2030. It will also serve as a forum where members of the Group of Friends can discuss how to reiterate the value of UHC as an overarching goal to promote good health and well-being for all at all ages within the context of the UN and the 2030 Agenda, including in emerging health crises and challenges. Finally, it will provide an opportunity for interested Member States to hear from relevant experts, partners and advocates on the various components and implications of health systems strengthening, including monitoring, accountability and the implementation measures necessary to achieve and sustain UHC. With its partners, the Group of Friends can also consider, on an *ad hoc* basis, to lend support and/or organize special events at the UN on UHC, as a follow-up to the Political Declaration of the HLM on UHC convened in 2019 and towards achieving UHC by 2030 as stipulated in the 2030 Agenda.

Structure: The Group of Friends of UHC will be open at the Permanent Representative (PR) and Deputy Permanent Representative (DPR) levels. The group was founded by Japan joined by Brazil, France, Ghana, Hungary, South Africa and Thailand in 2018 and is open to all Member States and Observers. The group is co-chaired by Japan, Georgia and Thailand, with close collaborations with the members and the UN system and other relevant partners. Meetings will be held on an as-needed basis in line with the aforementioned aim of the group.

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