

Terms of Reference

PAHO Strategic Consultative Meeting on Achieving Universal Health Coverage in the Americas

Strategic Consultative Meeting

The World Health Organization (WHO) has underscored the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as an objective of health systems development in both *The World Health Report 2008*, where UHC is described as one of the four guiding principles of Primary Health Care (PHC), and in *The World Health Report 2010*, which shows ways in which countries can modify their health financing systems to move towards UHC. WHO's 12th General Program of Work and PAHO's Strategic Plan for the period of 2014-2019, and the WHO and PAHO's 2014-2015 Program Budgets further support the advancement of UHC as a leadership priority. These core documents crystalize WHO's concerns for equity and social justice, and reinforce the links between health, social protection and economic policy. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Global Health and Foreign Policy of December 2012, and WHO's Report on Global Consultation on Health in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (February 2013) also frame UHC as a unifying and overarching objective within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

WHO has produced a briefing note, *Universal Health Coverage: WHO's Strategic Approach*, that attempts to find a working and organization-wide definition of UHC; addresses key obstacles within health systems toward the realization of UHC and how to overcome them; presents options to measure progress towards UHC; and proposes a WHO's strategic approach towards its advancement, as part of a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach.

In the Region of the Americas, several countries have made the political commitment to embrace UHC. These countries are at different stages in the path towards UHC and are already generating important lessons on enabling factors that include a normative framework, a governance system and institutional capacity for effective stewardship. The lessons reflect a diversity of experiences based on country social/economic realities and the maturity of the health system.

The UHC agenda has triggered an overwhelming response from partners at country level and the international community alike. PAHO has provided policy guidance and technical cooperation to Member States for the conceptualization and implementation of UHC. PAHO will continue having a critical role in moving UHC forward by supporting the development, implementation and review of multi-stakeholder, UHC-oriented national policies, strategies and plans. This role needs to be carefully defined and broadened to build on the opportunities brought about by change within the Region, coupled with the multiplicity of actors working towards the same end. PAHO's country presence, technical know-how and recognized convening role, amongst others, should be shaped into a distinct strategic approach that will focus the Organization's resources to ensuring that the Americas is the first region in the world to achieve goal of UHC.

Purpose of the UHC Strategic Consultative Meeting:

Strategically position the Pan American Health Organization to ensure leadership and added-value in the advancement of UHC within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda.

Objectives of the UHC Strategic Consultative Meeting:

The Consultative Meeting will gather a group of expert leaders from the Region and worldwide to review and/or identify:

- Broad situation analysis of the global and regional UHC agenda;
- Broad stakeholder and partner analysis supporting the advancement of UHC;
- PAHO's strategic role in the advancement of UHC agenda and key opportunities.

Format:

A two-day Consultative Meeting will be organized **12-13** September in Washington D.C. The first day will focus on reviewing the global and regional UHC agenda, and the partner/stakeholder analyses. The second day will be devoted to the development of recommendations that identify PAHO's unique role in moving UHC forward. The Meeting will be facilitated by a recognized expert in the area of UHC.

Inputs required:

- Broad situation analysis of the global and regional UHC agenda;
- Broad stakeholder and partner analysis supporting the advancement of UHC.

Deliverables:

The Consultative Meeting will issue a report with recommendations addressing:

- Current obstacles that country's face/broad regional situation analysis;
- Key strategic policy and technical cooperation lines of action addressing current needs and obstacles, for PAHO's role in the advancement of UHC at the regional and country level, in coordination with the global level;
- Key modalities of cooperation and strategic partnerships for PAHO to support the UHC agenda at the country and regional level, in coordination with the global level.

Reference material:

- The World Health Report 2008
- The World Health Report 2010
- WHO 12th General Program of Work, 2014-2019
- PAHO Strategic Plan, 2014-2019
- WHO Program Budget, 2014-2015 / PAHO Program Budget, 2014-2015
- Concept Note - *Universal Health Coverage: WHO Strategic Approach*, 2013.