



**World Health Day “Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere”**

**Reception hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO)**

**Thursday, 4 April 2019, 6:00 – 8:30 PM**

**The Water Club, 500 E 30th Street, NYC**

**Remarks by**

**H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King**

**President of the Economic and Social Council**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today for the commemoration of the World Health Day, dedicated to Universal Health Coverage (UHC). I also would like to take this opportunity to commend the World Health Organization for its vital work to build a better, healthier future for all around the world.

ECOSOC is grateful for WHO’s long-standing cooperation that led to advances in the health agenda over the years. Global public health was on top of the ECOSOC agenda in 2009, which paved the way to the

consideration of the issue of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) at the special meeting of the General Assembly in 2011. This was followed by a discussion on Universal Health Coverage during the High-level Segment of ECOSOC in 2013. ECOSOC also convened special meetings to address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of global public health emergencies and promote a coordinated strategic response.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council has addressed the interlinkages of universal health coverage and the other targets of the SDGs through the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the High-level Political Forum. The Council has also considered the issue of non-communicable diseases through the work of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs.

Excellencies,

Health is not only a goal (SDG3) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also an enabler for reaching the other SDGs. This was recognized at the highest level with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda which called for universal health coverage.

Today, at least half of the people in the world do not receive the health services they need. About 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty each year because of out-of-pocket spending on health. Unsafe and low-quality health care is ruining lives and costing the world trillions of dollars every year. This is not acceptable.

To make health for all a reality, we need:

- individuals and communities who have access to high quality health services so that they take care of their own health and the health of their families;
- skilled health workers providing quality, people-centred care; and
- policy-makers committed to investing in primary health care.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized that health challenges can no longer be addressed by the health sector alone. The health of people is not solely a health sector responsibility; it is crosscutting across the SDGs and is impacted by issues such as climate change, transport, agriculture, housing, trade and foreign policy. To address the multisectoral nature of health determinants requires the political will to engage the whole of society.

Excellencies,

This is a critical year for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. With the end of the first cycle of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) for Sustainable Development, we will complete the review of all the SDGs. And we will review our overall progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the HLPF Summit in September.

Anchoring in the right to health in the 2030 Agenda helps to firmly embed an approach of leaving no one behind and enabling progress towards universal health coverage. The High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September would be an important step to galvanize action for SDG target 3.8 which calls for achieving universal health coverage by 2030, including financial risk protection and access to quality healthcare, medicines and vaccines.

This year, we must seize the opportunity to accelerate action towards universal health coverage, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda, as well as all the other SDGs and targets, to ensure no one is left behind.

Thank you!