

# Meeting Notes – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025

## *The Path to Universal Health Coverage in Five African and Asian Countries*

### **Introduction**

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is a central global health goal aimed at ensuring that all people have access to **essential health services** without suffering **financial hardship**. This paper examines the **pathways toward UHC** in five countries across **Africa and Asia**, highlighting how historical, political and economic contexts shape national health systems. The study emphasizes that progress toward UHC is not linear and depends on **policy choices, health financing arrangements** and **governance structures**.

### **Methodology**

The study employs a **comparative case study design**, analyzing secondary data from **national health accounts, household surveys** and **policy documents**. Key indicators examined include **service coverage, financial risk protection** and **out-of-pocket expenditure**. The authors compare health system reforms across the five countries to identify **common patterns, country-specific strategies** and **system-level challenges** influencing progress toward UHC.

### **Key Findings**

- Countries followed **different pathways** to UHC based on:
  - **Political will**
  - **Institutional capacity**
  - **Economic growth**
- Expansion of **public health financing** improved access to services.
- **Risk pooling mechanisms** reduced financial barriers for some populations.
- Persistent challenges included:
  - High **out-of-pocket payments**
  - **Inequities** in access
  - Exclusion of **informal sector populations**
- Strong **governance** and consistent policies supported better UHC progress.

### **Implications**

- Achieving UHC requires **context-specific strategies**, not a one-size-fits-all model.
- Reducing **direct household payments** is critical for financial protection.
- Strengthening **primary health care** improves equity and service delivery.
- Integration of health financing with **social protection systems** enhances coverage.

### **Call to Action**

- Governments should:
  - Increase **public investment in health**

- Expand **prepayment and pooling mechanisms**
  - Prioritize **equity-focused policies**
- Strengthen **health system governance** and accountability.
- Invest in **monitoring and evaluation** to track UHC progress.

### **Future of Research**

- Assess **long-term impacts** of UHC reforms on equity and quality of care.
- Study strategies to include **informal and vulnerable populations**.
- Explore the role of **political economy** in sustaining UHC reforms.
- Examine how **health system resilience** affects progress toward UHC.

Blessings,

Mercy W. KURIA