

Reporting back UN Interactive Stakeholder Hearings



A MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION
FIGHTING CANCER TOGETHER

Summary of discussions

September 2023 will see three high-level meetings on tuberculosis, pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR) and universal health coverage (UHC). As part of the preparations for these meetings, interested stakeholders from around the world were invited to join a series of discussions in New York on 8 and 9 May 2023. The goal was to gather perspectives to inform the development of three political declarations, which will map out progress and new goals. UICC participated in the discussions and a summary is provided below, with links to the statements and recordings of the talks.

Universal Health Coverage

Tuesday 9 May 2023

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, countries were off track to achieve UHC and other health-related sustainable development goals. Now, as governments look to recover from the effects of the pandemic, the need to reinvigorate policies and programmes to accelerate UHC is more critical than ever.

Opening the discussions, H.E. Mr Csaba Kőrösi, President of the UN General Assembly, underscored that health is a right, not a privilege, and that efforts to accelerate UHC are fundamental to achieving and protecting a suite of other human rights. Ms Gabriela Cuevas Barron, co-Chair of

UHC 2030, echoed this sentiment and called on all governments to better use the law to pave the way for UHC and to ensure that national budgets reflect the support expressed for UHC in political discussions.

The multi-stakeholder discussions were built around two panels – the first looked at **UHC as a driver to accelerate health for all**, the second explored moving **from a commitment to UHC to actions and accountability**. These panels featured statements from civil society, the private sector, governments and multilateral organisations from around the world.

Some of the key themes which emerged were the need to rapidly scale up investment in health, and primary health care in particular, with calls from the WHO Special Envoy for Europe for a commitment to a 3% investment of GDP in disease prevention and 5% investment of GDP in primary health care. Meeting the global shortfall in investment, particularly as countries recover from the pandemic, will be essential to overcoming many persistent challenges across health systems.

These challenges include addressing the global shortfall in healthcare workers, estimated by WHO to be around 10 million.¹ Speakers emphasised key opportunities to improve the healthcare workforce's training, working conditions and remuneration, including closing the gender pay gap and

¹ WHO Health Workforce Factsheet, accessible at https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-workforce#tab=tab_1 [Accessed 13 June 2023]

addressing the limited career development and other resources for community health workers.

Many speakers also emphasised the critical importance of bringing healthcare closer to patients and communities, with repeated calls to strengthen primary healthcare as the entry point to health systems and to reduce the financial load on patients and the burden on secondary and specialist facilities. To support these efforts, several speakers emphasised the need to improve data and information and that vulnerable groups are missing from data leading to their continued marginalisation in planning and resource allocation. Governments were, therefore, urged to work more closely with civil society organisations (CSOs) to improve outreach to these groups and individuals and help facilitate better community participation in health decision making, noting that there is a no one-size-fits-all approach.

Raising the importance of NCDs in the achievement of UHC, UICC welcomed comments from a representative of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, who urged governments to improve communication with communities, following lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic around the need to enhance health promotion and disease prevention information and strengthen the capacities of CSOs in engaging communities. UICC echoed these messages in its statement, calling on governments to integrate core cancer and other NCDs services into UHC packages to respond to patient and population needs, drawing on the guidance available in the updated menu of cost-effective policy options in Appendix 3. Without concerted action to address cancer and NCDs, UHC will remain out of the reach of many countries, forcing individuals, families and communities into preventable ill health and catastrophic health spending.

Listen to the [recording of the discussions on UHC](#)

[Read UICC's statement](#)

² Concept note: Interactive multistakeholder hearing as part of the preparatory process toward the High-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Accessible at <https://www.un.org/pga/77/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2023/03/Concept-Note-PPPR-Stakeholder-Hearing.pdf>

[Read UICC's asks for the second UN HLM on UHC](#)

Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

Tuesday 9 May 2023

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) discussions are generally concerned with the socio-economic, gender, human rights and educational impacts of ² In response to the wide-ranging socio-economic, gender, human rights and educational effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are often the focus of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) discussions, ³ Governments around the world agreed to hold a High-Level Meeting on Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR). Running in parallel with negotiations in Geneva on a [new pandemic accord](#) and [amendments to the international health regulations](#), the discussions on PPPR were structured in two halves; panel 1, which focused on **lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and the case for Pandemic, Prevention, Preparedness and Response**; and panel 2, which explored **investing in Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response**.

The session opened with an address from Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, who highlighted the impact of overlapping crises on populations worldwide, the need for greater mutual accountability and international support. In this regard, Dr Tedros celebrated the recent establishment of the [Pandemic Fund](#) by the World Bank. Building on many of the WHO Director General's points, the panels brought together experts from around the world who strongly criticised vaccine nationalism and called for establishing more robust mechanisms to ensure the equitable distribution of vaccines and other resources to ensure equity.

³ Concept note: Interactive multistakeholder hearing as part of the preparatory process toward the High-level meeting on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Accessible at <https://www.un.org/pga/77/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2023/03/Concept-Note-PPPR-Stakeholder-Hearing.pdf>

Another theme from the panel was the critical importance of safeguarding the health workforce, particularly nurses who provide frontline care. There is also an innate need for further measures to improve gender equity, given that over 70% of the healthcare workforce are women but women are largely missing from decision-making positions.

UICC warmly welcomed the comments by a representative from the International Council of Nurses, who articulated the importance of public health information, health promotion, and primary and community-focused care as the foundation for both pandemic responses and long-term health and development. This complemented the statement made by the NCD Alliance about the importance of including people living with NCDs, including cancer, in the planning and implementation of PPPR strategies.

In the second panel, discussions turned to the financing of PPPR activities, with participants highlighting the ongoing disparities in the resources and capacities of countries to respond effectively to pandemics. In the discussion, participants recognised the broader nature of threats which may trigger or exacerbate future pandemics, including climate change and antimicrobial resistance. One of the central themes that emerged was that PPPR work cannot and should not stand alone. Instead, governments should invest in UHC and primary health care to make populations and health systems more resilient. People-centred care, the panellists noted, was the best way to identify and respond to future conditions with pandemic potential and deliver the necessary people-centred care to strengthen population health.

UICC prepared a short statement on PPPR, building on feedback and experiences shared by UICC member organisations. The report calls on governments to commit to the continuation of essential cancer and NCD services in pandemics; adopt a One Health approach to PPPR and link with activities taking place on topics like AMR; engage civil society organisations in national planning and response; and avoid potential or actual conflicts of interest with health-harming industries which have used the pandemic to redeem their public image and re-engage in policy discussions. The team warmly welcomed comments by colleagues from the World Hospice Palliative Care Alliance around the critical omission of palliative care from many pandemic plans and instruments; the need for palliative care in pandemics and UHC cannot be understated.

[Listen to the recording of discussions on PPPR](#)

[Read UICC's statement on PPPR](#)



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