



World Cancer
Leaders' Summit

Cancer and

Universal Health Coverage

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Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

World Cancer Leaders' Summit call to action

Less than one month ago, Governments met in New York at the UN High-level meeting on UHC to agree a plan for achieving UHC in every country globally. The Political Declaration on UHC adopted there is an important step forward. For the first time Governments around the world have recognised how important it is to deliver UHC, including accelerating efforts to tackle the growing burden of NCDs, including cancer. This was yet another recognition that cancer and NCDs are a global threat to health, development and equity.

But while this is important, it is the first step on a much longer journey. We have seen from the Political Declarations on NCDs that these documents provide the global political framework, but we need to build a movement to drive action. Leaving no-one behind must be our rallying cry, if we stand a chance of achieving health for all by 2030.

Looking ahead to the second high-level meeting in 2023 and beyond, I can see three areas where our community can drive change:

First, we need to see Governments fulfilling the commitments they have already made.

We did not start the journey to UHC on the 23rd September. Instead, we are building on a strong foundation - we have the action plans, resolutions, and technical recommendations we need to significantly curtail the global cancer burden. We know what to do and, thanks to many of you here today, we have the knowledge and evidence that can drive policy forward.

What we have lacked so far in a comprehensive approach is to turn these global commitments into action. We have a target of 80% access to essential medicines and technologies by 2025, however, as discussed throughout today, countries are struggling to reach this.

Effective action starts with a plan and, as of 2018, 81% of countries had cancer control plans. These set out the key services, indicators and investments needed to deliver comprehensive cancer control and must guide the prioritisation of interventions for UHC.

And, while delivering UHC is mainly in the hands of Governments, we all have a clear role to play in driving national discussions and working in partnership to design and deliver UHC.

Second, we need strong health systems that are built around **people**, not diseases.

Successful UHC can only be achieved with stronger health systems that can deliver the services patients need as people, not as diseases.

But our needs aren't unique:

- The building blocks we need- access to accurate data, trained health workers, access to essential medicines, vaccines, technologies and diagnostics- can help to build stronger health systems for all.
- The policies and programmes to shape the environment people live and address the social determinants of health benefit all, enabling us to build bridges beyond the cancer and NCD communities

- The investments we need in health promotion, prevention and early detection remain the most cost-effective ways to reduce the burden of cancer, other NCDs and communicable diseases and ensure that people can live in the best health possible.

We are seeing governments take up this challenge to build strong health systems, but we need the voices of patients around the table from planning through to evaluation to ensure that people are at the centre of these efforts.

Thirdly, we need all stakeholders to invest.

Governments have committed to invest an additional 1% of their GDP in health to support UHC, and this is a huge step forward. If this is achieved, it could unlock an additional 800 billion US dollars for health.

But we cannot rest on our laurels, we will need champions amongst Governments and coordinated advocacy by civil society to see this pledge realised. For low-income countries, even further catalytic support will be needed to kick-start investments in cancer and UHC to deliver on our global vision and so we must look to all stakeholders to play their part.

Reflecting on this, we have come a long way but have a number of major challenges ahead of us.

We all have a role in shaping awareness and knowledge of cancer nationally - we are part of the conversation about cancer and the delivery of quality cancer services.

The cancer community is willing and able to support governments around the world implement UHC, including cancer as a critical component of UHC's long term success. I wholeheartedly believe that we, the cancer community, have the expertise, passion and commitment needed to make UHC a reality and ensure that every country steps up to ensure that no cancer patient is left behind.

To each of you I would say – let's take action now so that, at the follow-up high level meeting on UHC scheduled for 2023, we have real progress to report in all of our countries.

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