

CONCEPT NOTE: SPOTLIGHT 3

Building resilience to global health threats and leaving no one behind: the need for more effective development cooperation – lessons from the health sector

12 December 2022, 6:15 - 7:15 PM CET

Background:

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its direct and indirect consequences underscored the centrality of health and well-being for human development and the need for building more equitable and resilient health systems that can protect everyone. Current multiple, overlapping crises, are undermining the hard-won progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): in relation to health and well-being for example, the world is going only at about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the rate needed to achieve the health-related targets of the SDGs by 2030. There is an urgent opportunity to leverage lessons learned from the COVID-19 response and ensure more and better-directed investment in the foundations of health systems, and a coherent, well-aligned, and integrated approach, based on primary health care, that leaves no one behind.

Maximizing the collective impact of Official Development Assistance (ODA) through more effective development cooperation is essential given the risk of reduced fiscal space of both countries and donors. COVID-19 has shown the importance of stronger coordination and alignment between development partners. It has also reinforced that health is everyone's business. It is important that all countries come together to ensure coherent action. This means for donor countries to honour their commitment from the [2019 Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#) "to provide adequate, predictable, evidence-based and sustainable finances, while improving their effectiveness, to support national efforts in achieving universal health coverage, in accordance with national contexts and priorities."

For low-income countries, ODA still has a critical role in supporting national efforts to UHC (SDG target 3.8). Strengthening health systems, with focus on primary health care, is the most equitable and sustainable way to accelerate progress towards UHC as well as health security. COVID-19 has prompted a surge in international support for health but there is no guarantee this will result in stronger health systems. Prior to the crisis, only 10 percent of total ODA for health was used to strengthen health systems, and it is often provided to countries in fragmented ways. In addition, less than 10 percent of ODA for health targets health security, and mostly for crisis response rather than preparedness investments. Collective action to prioritize support for health systems, including paying special attention to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women and girls, is crucial.

Financial and technical assistance must be coherent and aligned to countries' plans and needs. For enhanced coordination and alignment to succeed, the right incentives need to be in place. Governments play a key role in setting these incentives, particularly by demanding more effective development cooperation and alignment of specific interventions. Tools and mechanisms to promote this demand exist, including the [SDG3 Global Action Plan](#) monitoring framework and [UHC2030 country compacts](#).

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This event provides an opportunity to reflect on some of the health sector's lessons learned on improving effective development cooperation, including through specific tools and mechanisms. It will coincide with UHC Day campaign to "[Build the world we want: a healthy future for all](#)".

Purpose of the Session:

This session will provide the opportunity for constructive dialogue among different stakeholders on the importance of working better together to ensure more coherent action in deploying all types of development co-operation for the health sector and ways to prioritize support to health systems strengthening with primary health care as the means to achieve the intertwined goals of UHC and health security.

Objectives:

- Amplify the call to invest more and better as well as to improve tracking and reporting of ODA for UHC used to strengthen health systems.
- Propose action-oriented recommendations to feed in relevant political processes (e.g. OECD Development Assistance Committee, UN Financing for Development Forum, G7, and 2023 UN high-level meeting on UHC, etc.)
- Showcase best practices and impact of effective development cooperation to strengthen health systems, drawing on first-hand experiences, lessons learned and good practice at country level in creating the right incentives.
- Raise greater awareness of concrete applications of SDG3 GAP and UHC2030 tools which promote stronger incentives for coordination and alignment: SDG3 GAP case studies and government questionnaire, UHC2030 country compacts, etc.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the experience of countries and their development partners in using ODA to support health systems strengthening through primary health care as the most effective way to achieve sustainable results in terms of keeping people healthy and safe both in calm and crisis?
- What are the first-hand experiences, lessons learned and good practice in creating the right incentives in promoting better alignment of development cooperation with national priorities in the health sector and focus on making progress towards achieving UHC?
- In what ways can tools such as the SDG3 Global Action Plan's monitoring framework and UHC2030's country compacts help build stronger incentives for coordination among development partners and alignment with country priorities?

Session Focal Point:

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