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CONTACT: ALLIE WITTRY

[AWITTRY@WOMENDELIVER.ORG](mailto:AWITTRY@WOMENDELIVER.ORG) | T. +1.646.695.9100

## **UN's Universal Health Coverage Declaration: A Bold Commitment to Gender Equality and Health for All**

*The Alliance for Gender Equality and UHC welcomes the declaration and calls on Member States to use a gender lens to enact UHC at the national level.*

*New York, September 23, 2019*—The Alliance for Gender Equality and UHC welcomes the United Nations' [political declaration](#) on universal health coverage (UHC) as a powerful commitment to achieve health for all. The declaration is grounded in the principle of gender equality and will serve as guidance for governments to enact UHC at the national level.

Co-convened by the International Women's Health Coalition, Women Deliver, and Women in Global Health, the Alliance represents more than 100 organizations from more than 47 countries. The Alliance advocated for gender equality and a commitment to uphold sexual and reproductive health and rights by issuing clear policy priorities and leading a campaign to incorporate gender-responsive health care throughout the document.

"We are pleased that Member States heeded the broad, diverse call from civil society to prioritize gender equality in the political declaration," said Katja Iversen, President/CEO of Women Deliver. "For universal health coverage to be truly universal and transformative it must embrace gender equality in all forms—and that means providing explicit guarantees of sexual and reproductive health and rights. As we turn toward implementation, we will be watching closely to make sure that governments invest financially and politically in health care systems that work for all people."

Universal health coverage has powerful potential. It guarantees universal access to quality health services, essential medicines, and vaccines, and provides protection from catastrophic and routine health costs. The political declaration is clear that without considering the unique health needs of women, girls, and marginalized communities, the promise of UHC will not be realized.

"Importantly, the declaration addresses both health services and systems and commits to advance gender-responsive health services, recognize the distinct role and contributions of women in the health workforce, and promote women's participation in health leadership and governance," said Roopa Dhatt, executive director of Women in Global Health.

By addressing health comprehensively and reaffirming commitments to universal access to sexual and reproductive health, rights, and information, the declaration paves the way for transformative change in global health.

"Today's political declaration is a strong first step in delivering universal health coverage by 2030. It is now on Member States to turn their commitment into action and implement national UHC programs that will uphold human rights and address the entrenched inequalities, barriers, and norms that prevent women, girls, and gender diverse people from accessing the care they need and deserve," said Françoise Girard, president of the International Women's Health Coalition.

As governments work to implement the declaration, the Alliance calls on them to fulfill its promise, including to integrate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information; invest in women health workers and remunerate unpaid work; collect and use data to promote equity; and ensure affordable and accessible health care services to all.

The political declaration is a critical step toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to end poverty, eradicate inequality, and drive prosperity. Despite this shared commitment to deliver UHC by 2030, the declaration was not reached without tense debate. Sexual and reproductive health and rights were repeatedly contested by conservative governments, who sought to limit commitments to gender equality, human rights, and sexual and reproductive health. These attempts continue the worrying trend of push back on longstanding international commitments to women's health and rights, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Yet, even with this continued pressure, momentum for gender equality could not be slowed. The political declaration is a strong and unparalleled commitment by Member States to provide universal health coverage to all by 2030.

***About the Alliance for Gender Equality and UHC:***

The Alliance for Gender Equality and UHC, co-convened by the International Women's Health Coalition, Women Deliver, and Women in Global Health, comprises more than 100 civil society organizations from more than 40 countries worldwide, to drive collaboration and coordinated advocacy for gender-responsive Universal Health Coverage (UHC) policies, programs, and dialogue; including, but not limited to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Members of the Alliance:

Action for Global Health Network UK

AIHMS-GLOBAL

Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights

Allied Youth Initiative - Uganda

Amref

Amref Health Africa

ARROW(Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women)

Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Asociación Civil Mujeres en Línea

ASSOCIATION D'ENTRAIDE MEDICO-SOCIALE AEMS-ASBL

Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud A.C

BCH Africa Cameroon

CADS

CARE USA

Centre for Human Rights & Governance

Clean the World Foundation

COJET/PLATE-FORME

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY AID FOUNDATION-GHANA

Community Forum Organisation

C5 Collective

DAWN  
Development Africa Network  
Development Initiative for Community Enhancement (DICE)  
Diabetes Eswatini Organization  
DSW (Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung)  
EATHAN - East Africa Trans Health & Advocacy Network  
Education as a Vaccine  
Eurasian Network of People who use Drugs  
Family Planning NSW  
FP2020  
Frontline AIDS  
Global Coalition of TB Activists  
Global Health Advocacy Incubator  
Global Health Council  
Global Health Disrupted  
Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)  
GREATMINDS MENTORSHIP  
Groupe des Hommes Voués au Développement Intercommunautaire (GHOVODI)  
Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFRON)  
HENNET, the Health NGO Network  
Hivos  
ICASO  
International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH) - Ghent University  
International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)  
International Planned Parenthood Federation  
International Youth Alliance for Family Planning - IYAFF  
Ipas  
IWHC - International Women's Health Coalition  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
JOICFP  
Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KEFEADO)  
KMET  
Knit Together Initiative (KTI)  
Latin American and Caribbean Womens Health Network  
Liberia Immunization Platform -LIP  
Lok kalyan seva kendra  
Management Sciences for Health  
Marie Stopes International  
Medical IMPACT  
Medical Women's International Association  
Midwifery Society of Nepal  
Nadimpally  
NCD Alliance  
Nigerian Women Agro Allied Farmers Association

Organisation Yinéyinédián pour la Nature et le Développement Durable (OND)  
Oxfam  
PAI  
Pakachere Institute of Health and Development Communications  
Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health  
Pathfinder International  
Plan International NY Liaison Office  
Plan International uk  
Promundo  
Radha Paudel Foundation  
Real Relief  
Reprolatina- Soluções Inovadoras em Saúde Sexual e Reprodutiva  
Réseau Africa Volontaire (RAV)  
Réseau de la société civile d'apui et de soutien à la vaccination et au renforcement ddu système de santé en Mauritanie "Vacnet-Mauritanie"  
Restless Development  
RESURJ  
RFSU, IPPF Sweden  
Rising Winners Youth Empowerment Initiative ( RWYEI )  
Rutgers  
Rwenzori Center for Research and Advocacy  
Sama Resource Group for Women and Health  
Seed Global Health  
SERAC-Bangladesh  
Society for Mobilization Advocacy and Justice  
SPECTRA  
Sukaar Welfare Organization Pakistan  
SWAP  
Swasti Health Catalyst  
The George Institute for Global Health  
This-Ability Trust  
Uganda Network Of Young People Living With HIV  
Uganda Youth Alliance For Family Planning And Adolescent Health-UYAFPAH  
United Nations Foundation  
Visible Impact  
Vision Spring Initiatives  
White Ribbon Alliance  
Women Deliver  
Women for Human Rights & Democracy  
Women in Global Health  
Women's Global Health Innovations  
Women@theTable  
Y-ACT (AMREF Health Africa)  
Young Women For Change

Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka  
Youth Association for Development  
Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights  
YouAct

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