

Monitoring progress on
universal health coverage
and the health-related
Sustainable Development
Goals in the
South-East Asia Region



2022 update

SDGs, UHC and financial protection:
Leaving no one behind

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coverage and the health-related
Sustainable Development Goals in
the WHO South-East Asia Region

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Leaving no one behind**



**World Health
Organization**

South-East Asian Region

Monitoring progress on universal health coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals
in the WHO South-East Asia Region: 2022 update

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Foreword

It is a pleasure to introduce this seventh Annual Report on Monitoring progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the South-East Asia Region. Monitoring progress towards UHC and the health-related SDGs is crucial to understand where we are now, where we are likely to be in 2030, and what is needed to accelerate progress.



This year's report provides a comprehensive overview of the status and trends of selected health-related SDG targets across all 11 Member States. It follows the same format as in earlier years; however, the thematic focus is on financial protection.

Part 1 of the Report highlights progress towards UHC and health-related SDG targets. It shows that while the Region has witnessed an increase in the service coverage index – from 47 in 2010 to 61 in 2019 – the pace of improvement is inadequate to achieve the minimum essential service coverage index of 80 by 2030. The greatest progress has been in reproductive, maternal, newborn and child services, whereas accelerated progress is needed in service capacity and access, and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).

Part 2 of the Report provides a comprehensive overview of the status of financial protection. The South-East Asia Region has the highest level of out-of-pocket (OOP) spending as a share of current health expenditure (CHE) among all WHO regions. Out-of-pocket spending is predominantly driven by spending on medicines. Several countries have a high proportion of households that incur catastrophic health care expenditure and/or get pushed into poverty or further into poverty. The good news is that between 2000 and 2017, the total population in the Region impoverished and further impoverished due to OOP health spending has substantially decreased, from almost 30% to about 6%, respectively. But despite this outcome, the overall number of people with impoverishing health spending in the Region remains high, at 117 million in 2017.

There is an urgent need to increase public spending on health, especially on medicines and to support the poorest segments of the population. Domestic government spending on health in the Region is low, comprising an average 35% of current health expenditure. Adequate levels of government spending on health is associated with a lower incidence of financial hardship. In spite of a difficult macro-fiscal environment – which involves reduced government revenues, increased spending as well as deficit financing and higher debt levels – it is critical that countries prioritize public financing for health, make health financing more efficient, and allocate public resources for health more equitably.

Part 3 of the Report is on Member States' SDG profile, reporting on health and health-related SDG indicators using nationally reported data and estimates. Most Member States have made considerable progress in reducing maternal and child mortality and improving childhood immunization. The Region has also achieved remarkable improvements in the

control and elimination of communicable diseases such as malaria. However, several areas require accelerated effort. Tuberculosis (TB), NCDs, and the social and environmental determinants of health are all major concerns. There is also rising concern about the double burden of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age.

In the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery, all countries of the Region have prioritized the need to invest in and reorient health systems towards strong primary health care to achieve UHC, enhance health security, and address determinants of health, as well as to promote health equity, human rights and gender equality, and to empower communities. I urge all countries and partners to utilize the data and analysis herein to make concerted efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving our Regional Flagship Priorities and the health-related SDG targets.



Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh
Regional Director
WHO South-East Asia

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