



PLENARY SESSION 0

ACCELERATING PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

| BACKGROUND

- Health is a fundamental human right, which should be enjoyed by all people. Furthermore, investments in health aimed at achieving universal health coverage (UHC) could contribute to accumulation of human capital that is indispensable for sustainable development.
- In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 70/1, “Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” which reaffirmed that achieving UHC would ensure healthy lives and well-being for all people. However, nearly half of the earth’s population is still unable to access basic healthcare services, and 100 million people fall into poverty each year due to heavy burden of medical expenses. According to UHC Global Monitoring Report 2019 (GMR 2019), the world needs to double health coverage until 2030 in order to achieve the SDGs on UHC. Otherwise, GMR 2019 forecasts that, if current trends continue, up to 5 billion people will still be unable to access health care in 2030. Therefore, effort to achieve the 2030 Agenda should be accelerated more than ever.
- Back in 2017, the Government of Japan, World Bank, WHO, UNICEF, UHC2030, and JICA jointly held the UHC Forum 2017 and adopted the Tokyo Declaration on UHC to build up the momentum towards the achievement of UHC. The declaration aimed to highlight the importance of enhancing political momentum in international fora, the necessity of country-led coordination among stakeholders regarding assistance towards achieving UHC, and the potential of innovation for UHC. Subsequently, UHC flagship event was held on the margins of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meeting in 2018. In the event, the importance of the roles played by finance ministers in structuring a sustainable health financing system was highlighted, as well as the necessity of collaboration between finance and health authorities in due course. Then, in 2019, the G20 under Japanese Presidency discussed importance of strengthening health financing to move towards UHC. The G20 Finance Minister successfully put together “the G20 Shared Understanding on the Importance of UHC Financing in Developing Countries” which summarizes key considerations that finance authorities should take into account in structuring a health financing system for UHC, and both the G20 finance and health ministers affirmed their commitment to the shared understanding document in their joint session held on the margins of G20 Osaka Summit.
- Against this backdrop, the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on UHC was held in September 2019 where the political declaration with a dedicated focus on UHC was adopted for the first time. The political declaration affirmed that UHC contributes not only to health and well-being, but also to broader development issues including poverty reduction, economic growth, and social inequalities. In addition, the political declaration suggested a number of necessary actions to achieve UHC, such as: (i) investing in innovations related to health technologies, service delivery and health information; (ii) developing a PHC-based health system to meet the needs of people; (iii) strengthening health financing through the whole-of-government coordination between the health sector and others including the finance sector, (iv) fostering strategic leadership at the highest political level for inter-sectoral interventions; (v) building capacity of local authorities while enhancing the engagement of communities and stakeholders.
- In 2020, the second UHC Forum will be jointly held with PMAC 2020. This event would be an ideal opportunity to call for concrete actions, building upon strong global political commitments in the past. At the outset, the Plenary 0 in PMAC2020/UHC Forum2020 is to set the scene of efforts and challenges in promoting UHC among political leaders and provides the platform to articulate following three sub-themes; Sub-theme 1: Implementation challenges and innovation solutions for UHC 2030, Sub-theme 2: Sustainable financing for expanding and deepening UHC and Sub-theme 3: Adapting to the changing global landscape: fostering UHC-based solidarity to drive towards SDGs

| OBJECTIVES

1. Sharing the experiences to foster the political momentum of UHC at 5 years after the launching of SDGs and discussing the challenges to build sustainable health system for UHC.
2. Discussing the next step from political commitment to actual actions to achieve UHC by 2030 from the viewpoints of various stakeholders. (Particularly about (i) Innovation, (ii) PHC-oriented health system, (iii) Health financing)



Keynote Speaker / Speaker

Anutin Charnvirakul

The Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister

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H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul is the Minister of Public Health since July 2019. He formerly served as the Deputy Minister of Public Health during July – October 2004 and March 2005 – September 2006 and as the Deputy Minister of Commerce during October 2004 – March 2005. He is a leader of the Bhumjaithai Party since November 2012.

Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul graduated from Hofstra University, United States with Bachelor Degree in Industrial Engineering. He has also received Honorary Doctorate Degree in several fields, including Civil Engineering, Management, Public Administration, and Economics. He was the President of Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction Public Co., Ltd during March 1995 – June 2004. He also served as the Director to the Federation of Thai Industries and Thai Contractors Association Under H.M. the King's Patronage.

In serving as the Minister of Public Health, he brings to the position over 25 years of experience in business development and organizational management. His priorities in public health are to “Reduce health expenditures, increase revenue, make people healthy, and make the nation wealthy”. Under his leadership, Thailand is the first country in Asia to legalize medical cannabis.