

Statement of the 1st Pan-African Health Congress on Universal Coverage

Alisa Hotel, Accra, Ghana 15th – 17th November 2011

Theme: Creating a Movement for Universal Coverage in Health for Africa (MUCH in Africa)

The 1st Pan-African Health Congress on Universal Coverage was held from the 15th -17th November 2011 at the Alisa Hotel, Accra, Ghana. The Congress under the theme “creating a movement for universal coverage in health for Africa” known simply as “MUCH in Africa” was attended by representatives of ministries of health, directors general, chief executives of health insurance schemes, chief directors, principal secretaries, academics, policy experts and researchers from twenty-five (25) African countries and multilateral, bilateral, regional, development partner and civil society organisations.

The ceremony was opened by the Minister of Health, Ghana, Honourable Joseph Yileh Chireh on one behalf of the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, HE John Dramani Mahama. The Deputy Director General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Anarfi Asamoah-Baah was the key note speaker.

At the end of the Congress participants agreed to:

1. Sustain the momentum generated by African experts and their collaborating development partners at this meeting to find practical solutions to the continent's problems to achieve universal coverage;
2. Retain the Congress as the platform for stakeholders involved in health financing and health insurance for universal coverage to:
 - a) Generate awareness and interest in adopting proven social health financing and comprehensive health systems strengthening mechanisms within the region;
 - b) Coordinate and leverage cross-learning and joint implementation activities among countries and make inputs into the Africa agenda for attaining the goal of universal health coverage;
 - c) Work with countries with the requisite expertise, universities, research institutions, regional and international bodies to bring technical support and mobilise resources to strengthen health systems
 - d) Sustain an interface between activities and outcomes of this Congress and meetings of heads of state and ministers to leverage political support for proven reform initiatives that accelerate progress in Africa;
 - e) Encourage a positive engagement with international partners to scale up social health financing mechanisms and systems strengthening initiatives in African countries;
 - f) Facilitate the publication and dissemination of African and international scientific knowledge including its translation and reproduction;
 - g) Identify opportunities for collaborative research and knowledge production to bring systematic evidence that support the effective implementation of different sustainable social health financing mechanisms being up-scaled as a positive intervention in Africa; and
3. Establish an international Congress coordinating mechanism to oversee the implementation of the commitments in this statement and affairs of the Congress. The Centre for Health and Social Services will serve as the interim secretariat.
4. Convene the 2nd Pan-African Health Congress on Universal Coverage in 2013 to review progress, share insights and experiences and set new agenda for accelerating universal coverage based on the evidence. Uganda has offered to host the next Congress