

# EMRO: a historic commitment to universal health coverage

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More than a dream; it's a right.

It was a historic and poignant moment in Salalah, Oman on 4 September 2018, when 20 country representatives in the Eastern Mediterranean Region collectively signed the UHC2030 Global Compact for achieving universal health coverage.

Together, they made a firm commitment to take the necessary steps for achieving UHC.

EMRO's Health Systems Department conceived the idea for securing joint high-level regional political commitment for UHC. It facilitated horizontal and vertical collaboration among the three levels of WHO to hold a regional ministerial meeting and bring together Ministers of Health, and other representatives from Member States and development partners. This led to shared ownership and endorsement for the Salalah Declaration for UHC and UHC2030 Global Compact.

Find out more about the Salalah Declaration [here](#).

Read the UHC2030 Global Compact [here](#).

“ As a Minister of Health, you should create a kind of two-pronged approach and make some quick wins. Then you gather the support of the public and at the same time the support of the policy leaders.



Dr Recep Akdag, Former Minister of Health and Deputy Prime Minister, Turkey.



H.E. Ms Faeqa bint Saeed Al-Saleh, Minister of Health, Bahrain

“ The population for Bahrain is about 1 million, 600. You can say it's manageable but for us, we still have challenges. It is not the quantity, it is about quality.

“ We believe in equity and equality; equity for whoever lives in Oman, whether an Omani or a non-Omani. They deserve the best health care available.



HE Dr Ahmed Mohamed Obaid Al Saidi,  
Minister of Health, Oman



H.E. Mr Bahar Idris Abu Garda,  
Federal Minister of Health, Sudan

“ The Ministry of Health is the focal point, but health concerns everyone. We focus on prevention rather than the curative, which is also important; but we need to focus on primary health care.



“ In 2003, we defined a basic package of health services to everybody.

As a result of that, maternal mortality, infant mortality and under-five mortality declined dramatically.



I.H.E. Dr Feroz Firozuddin,  
Minister of Public Health, Afghanistan



Dr Zafar Mirza, Director Health System  
Development, WHO/EMRO

“ Making a policy and dreaming about it is one thing, but implementing it is another. In the last couple of years, we have deepened extensively our understanding about the ‘how’ part of UHC policy.

“ Our region is unique in terms of emergencies and disasters, either manmade or natural. When it comes to health, we must act as one body to bring unity, regardless of differences of opinions and directions of member states.



Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director Eastern Mediterranean Region



Dr Naoko Yamamoto, WHO, Assistant Director General for health systems and universal health coverage

“ It’s a wonderful commitment from all political leaders to sign the UHC2030 Global Compact to achieve UHC. To operationalize this, WHO stands ready to support countries’ policies and implementation plans.