

**Special Editorial****Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: Parliaments to ensure the Right to Health**

Health is a fundamental right of every human being, without distinction of any kind, but this is not a right enjoyed by everyone.

At least half of the world's population still do not have full coverage of essential health services, about 100 million people are still being pushed into “extreme poverty” (living on 1.90 USD or less a day) because they have to pay for health care. In Bangladesh, the out-of-pocket health expenditure is 63 percent of the total health expenditure. Furthermore, Bangladesh have shortage of approximately 100,000 doctors and approximately 800,000 health care providers compare to the global standard. In this scenario, Bangladesh requires proper implementation of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Thus, Bangladesh needs minimum 15% of the total budget for the health sector while current allocation is just over 4%.

‘Health for All’ agenda set by the Alma Ata Declaration in 1978 has now the new dimension of commitment by the Global community through the SDGs of 2030. The solution stays in Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The world has agreed to try to achieve UHC by 2030, as part of the SDGs.

***UHC: the right to health***

UHC means that all people and communities can use the promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship. Moving towards UHC needs sustainable financing, skilled health workers, good governance, reliable service delivery, meticulous data management, and comprehensive access to medicines. But one of the often-overlooked aspects is the fact that UHC requires a strong legal framework. Strong laws are essential to protect and promote the right to health, as well as equity, quality, efficiency and accountability.

***Connecting the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) – the global organization of parliaments***

Parliaments are crucial in the design, implementation and monitoring of law, policies and programmes relevant to realizing the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Parliaments have the responsibility to protect the people they represent, including the most vulnerable groups. That is the mandate of IPU – the global organization of parliaments. At its last Assembly in October 2018 in Geneva, the IPU adopted my proposal on behalf of the Bangladesh Parliament to develop a resolution on “Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health”. It is the first time, a global parliamentary resolution on UHC will be developed and it testifies to the commitment on health and the SDGs of the IPU and its Members. Recalling the major international commitments towards the achievement of UHC, the IPU resolution I proposed would represent the main parliamentary instrument to contribute to this global process, and to design the role that Parliaments are called to play and concrete actions to be taken.

***Let's put our hand together for a better future—leaving no one behind***

The catch-cry of the SDGs is to “leave no one behind”. That's exactly what UHC aims to do. We cannot tolerate a world in which people are forced to choose between sickness and financial hardship. The world is moving towards this important achievement. And we need to play our role. We want to honour a promise that is bold yet simple, and that will change the lives of millions of people across the World – health coverage that is universal; health coverage that is for everyone, everywhere and leaves no one behind – ensuring right to health.

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*Correspondence: Prof. Dr. Md. Habibe Millat, MP, MBBS, FRCS (Edin), Chairman, Editorial Board, Bangladesh Medical Research Council Bulletin, e-mail: [profhmillat@gmail.com](mailto:profhmillat@gmail.com)*