

8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

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Virtual

Report of Roundtable on SDG 3 on 24 March 2021



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1. Policy recommendations on priority for action to make further progress on SDG 3 in Asia and the Pacific

The round table on Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well Being) made several recommendations on the Goal for Asia and the Pacific:

Recommendation 1: Coverage of health services. It is recommended that countries focus on health systems strengthening, to sustain and protect the progress that has been made and recover the gains that have been lost during the pandemic. Countries should achieve more equitable coverage of health services, particularly comprehensive sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health services. This will be made possible through improving the numbers, distribution and retention of health workers, particularly midwives, and ensuring they are trained to high-quality standards. Addressing harmful gender and social norms will contribute

to reducing inequities in access and use of health care, particularly for vulnerable population groups and in fragile settings.

Recommendation 2: Innovation. Innovations in healthcare provision should be explored to ensure coordination and continuity of care, using new technologies. Innovation can be used both for capacity building of the health workforce through virtual learning, and to increase service delivery through telemedicine, point of care diagnostics and self-care medical innovations. Partnerships with the private sector can support the development and use of new technologies for health.

Recommendation 3: Data for health. To achieve better coverage and quality of health services, it is recommended that countries invest in health and logistic management information systems, strengthen data quality and improve the availability of disaggregated data. Investments are needed to build local capacities to collect, synthesise and analyse reliable and comparable data, disaggregated by equity stratifiers such as gender, age, income and residence. This will allow countries to identify those who are left behind, enable rapid decision making and inform equity-oriented health programs, policies and practices, to attain health for all. Investments are also needed in learning systems focused on continuous quality improvement to generate and translate data for action.

Recommendation 4: Quality of care. It is recommended to improve the quality of care for all, including for gender non-conforming communities, women and adolescent girls, older persons, migrant and indigenous populations, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized and disadvantaged groups. There is a need to enhance an accountability framework using human centered approaches to reach those left behind, and to provide efficient, equitable care while maintaining quality across populations. Countries should strengthen and reform primary health care, a key to achieving Universal Health Care, as it addresses community health needs. Ensuring timely procurement, equitable distribution, appropriate use and maintenance of essential medical commodities can facilitate delivery of high-quality health services. Attention is needed on continuous quality improvement of healthcare across the life-course, at all levels of services, and across population groups.

Recommendation 5: Integration and response. It is recommended to increase engagement and awareness among both health and non-health stakeholders, as progress in other SDGs is critical to achieving the SDG3. Countries should promote “health in all policies” – a coherent approach to public policies across all sectors that takes into account health implications, seeks collaborations and addresses the social determinants of health. Countries should adopt policy frameworks that promote integrated approaches between environmental, animal, and human health, including climate change and air pollution. Countries need to have a preparedness, response and recovery plan for pandemics and other emergencies that includes comprehensive risk communication, continuation of health services, procurement of emergency supplies. These plans should be developed using participatory and gender responsive approaches, including focus on the intersectionalities and leaving no one behind (LNOB).

Recommendation 6: Health financing. It is recommended to increase health expenditures and ensure that all countries have allocated sufficient resources to strengthen their health systems and finance their national health plans, including pandemics and other emergencies preparedness and response plans. This should be achieved by strengthening domestic resource mobilisation and increasing public revenues, for example by improving the tax system administration and designing more equitable tax policies, such as smart earmarking

of taxes to support health programs. It is recommended that countries improve public expenditure efficiency and enhance the prioritisation of health programs. Countries should also expand access to essential health services coverage by reducing out-of-pocket and catastrophic health expenditures and improving financial protection, through the implementation of national health insurance schemes and strengthening public-private sector partnerships.