



**GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE**  
***MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SANITATION***  
**Directorate of Policy, Planning and Information**

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**REPORT**

**INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE DAY**  
**SIERRA LEONE**

**12 December 2019**

## **Introduction**

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day on 12 December is the annual rallying point for the growing movement for health for all. It marks the anniversary of the United Nations' historic and unanimous endorsement of universal health coverage in 2012, signifying unprecedented momentum and global commitment to achieving Health for All by 2030. This day was first officially recognised and celebrated by UN to raise awareness for Health For all on 12th December, 2018.

This year's UHC Day, with the theme "Keep the Promise", was the 12<sup>th</sup> day in September where all UN Member States agreed to a Political Declaration on UHC. Heads of State, at the High-Level Meeting on UHC at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 23 September 2019, demonstrated strong political vision and commitment to ensuring UHC for the people they serve. In the resulting political declaration, UN Member States recognized the importance of primary health care as "the cornerstone of a sustainable health system for universal health coverage and health-related Sustainable Development Goals."

Sierra Leone this year joined UHC advocates all around the world, demanding accountability from our leaders to 'Keep the Promise'.

The celebration started off (5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> December,2019) with airing of UHC Jingles, Radio discussion programs, engaging school children and Tech-vocational students as well as market women. The Hon Minister of Health and Sanitation, Prof Alpha T. Wurie did press briefings on UHC both at the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) and at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation Conference Hall. Speaking to the press, staff of the MoHS and other distinguished guests, the Hon Minister of Health said, "Universal Health Coverage is Non-Political" but the "Vehicle is political" and the New Direction Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone is doing everything in its power to ensure affordable, equitable and quality health services for all. He highlighted successes of the government mainly in terms of reducing Maternal and Child Mortality using Mobile phone SMS and ambulance services (Dial 300/400) for prompt medical emergencies and the establishment of the western area Blood bank services at PCMH; also, the launching of the Drone initiative in Bo by His Excellency the President

of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Brig. Dr Julius Maada Bio . He mentioned that, Paramount Chiefs of all chiefdoms, section chiefs and religious leaders will be involved in the UHC process.

The Hon Minister encouraged The Press to explain the significance of UHC and how cost effective it will be implemented using Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance as a component of UHC. The Hon Member of Parliament, Chairman of HAPAH, pledged his full support to rally all political parties in support of UHC.

Statements were made by the DCMO-PH, Dr TT Samba and The Director of DPPI, Dr Francis Smart insisted that UHC will provide quality health care to the poorest and ensure affordable cost for quality health services without financial hardship. Expressing thanks and appreciation to the Hon Minister of Health and Sanitation and all present, Mrs Emmanuella K. Anderson, Health Coordinator of the DPPI-MoHS expressed that GoSL through the MoHS has been making strides towards improving health care services for all, especially through the Free Healthcare Initiative for pregnant, lactating mothers and under-five children. She reiterated that UHC this time is for all and The Press should publish this nationwide.

### **Commemorating International UHC Day, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2019**

The International UHC Day was flamboyantly peaked by a commemoration, at the Miatta Conference car park. All geared up in their 'Keep the Promise' T-Shirts and caps with school kids, Tech-vocational students in uniforms, Fliers, banners and placards with inscriptions demanding government to 'Keep the Promise' they made at UNGA in 2012-2019. The occasion was graced by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Health, being the Keynote Speaker at the event. He reaffirmed the government's commitments to ensuring equitable and quality healthcare service to everyone everywhere including school going kids, teenagers, the aged, Ebola survivors, disabled, etc. The Hon Deputy Minister, Dr Anthony A. Sandi mentioned that, Sierra Leone has joined the international network of quality of care as one of the strides to improve productivity, economic growth and development in Sierra Leone.

Statements were made by the Chairman who was the Chief Medical Officer; Dr Amara Jambia and Deputy Chief Medical Officer; Dr TT Samba of Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Our Statistician General, of Statistics Sierra Leone, World Health

Organization Country Representative, Country Manager of World Bank, Country Rep-DFID, CISMAT and CHASL.

The occasion ended up with a vote of thanks by the Director of Policy, Planning and Information.

Food and drinks were served to all attendees.

## **Objective**

To create awareness and commemorate International UHC day, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 with theme, "Keep the promise".

## **Methodology**

In order to engage, sensitize the community nationwide and celebrate International UHC Day, the Media (Radio, Newspapers and TV) were utilized, Market women and School children as well as students from vocational training institutions were engaged, UHC Jingles aired in nine (9) Local languages, Press briefings done, IEC materials were shared, statements made from authorities and diplomats in society and a short skit on UHC was presented.

## **Results**

Communities nationwide had an initial sensitization on UHC through the media and one-on-one engagement.

**(Please see Programme for International UHC Day 2019 below)**

## **Challenges**

- There was not adequate time to produce UHC theme song
- The wrist band and Calendar not designed and procured (Funding available at WHO procurement office)
- Pre-recordings for UHC Day with WHO Representative and Hon Minister of Health did not materialise (Le2,000,000 given back to WHO procurement)

- Funding was not enough to commemorate UHC Day at DHMTs

## Conclusion

Universal Health Coverage is attainable in Sierra Leone if all stakeholders can come on board for a sustainable healthcare system. Having pre-oriented the public, growth and development is ensured. We must continue to sensitize all to seek quality health care when needed and leave no one behind.

## Recommendations

- Early preparations;
- Involve DHMT nationwide in the celebration as they are the ones to mainly implement UHC
- Airing of UHC jingles and Theme song from February to April 2020;
- Contact and book His Excellency the President and other statement makers for schedule date of UHC initiative launching;
- To provide enough food for invitees
- Deciding what to launch and get funding as early as possible

## Appendix 1.0



Engaging market women on UHC

## Appendix 2.0



Press Briefing at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation conference hall, Wednesday, 11th December, 2019

## Appendix 3.0



**UHC Banner 2019 commemoration**



**High Table at International UHC Day**



Welcoming audience and introduction of the Chairman by the Health Coordinator, DPPI-MoHS



Cross section of audience during UHC launching

## PROGRAMME

- **Arrival of guest**
- **9:30- 9:40am Prayers:** Christian (4 minutes)  
Muslim
- **9:40-9:44 Introduction of the Chairman – Health Coordinator -DPPI**
- **9:45-50 Chairman’s Opening Remarks**
- **9:50am – 10:30am Statements (4 minutes each)**
  - Permanent Secretary- MoHS
  - WHO Representative
  - Country Manager -World Bank
  - Country Representative -DFID
  - CISMAT



- Faith Base Organization-CHASL
- Civil Society Organizations-Health Alert
- Statistician General, Stats SL
- Her Worship Mayor FCC
- Ministry of Local Government and Rural development
- Presentation Statement on UHC – DCMO-PH
- **Short Skit**

**11:30am**

**Keynote Address:** Prof. Alpha T. Wurie

Hon Minister of Health and Sanitation

**Vote of Thanks**

**Director-DPPI**

**Interaction and refreshment**

