

# CENTRAL TOPICS 2019

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## **Climate Change and Health**

Climate change poses an unquestionable threat to human health, affecting everyone on the planet and children in particular. There is an urgent need to translate existing evidence into policy actions and to produce new research to fill gaps in the knowledge base. This requires a One Health approach, considering climate change in all areas of policy development, and ensuring that health systems are prepared to face the challenges rising temperatures bring.

## **Transforming Human Capital: Investing in Health and Education**

The UN high-level political declaration on UHC, adopted in September 2019, sets out a clear agenda on the attainment of SDG3. One of the major challenges identified in the declaration is how to accelerate investments in the health workforce to overcome the global shortages predicted by 2030, especially in countries with the weakest PHC systems and the furthest from UHC. This requires building the necessary foundations for PHC: investments in core infrastructure, both health facilities and preservice education institutions, and in health worker employment, retention and productivity. There is an emerging opportunity to link investments in education, skills and jobs in the health sector with the broader work of human capital and social spending, engaging the international financing institutions and all relevant partners as necessary.

## **Universal Health Coverage:**

### **Expanding Rights and Access**

SDG 3.8 envisions that by 2030, all people will be able to use health services of sufficient quality without facing financial hardship. Despite strong international support for universal health coverage (UHC), country-level financing and implementation remains challenging. Multi-sectoral approaches are key to generating political will for investment in UHC and driving appropriate reforms. Stronger accountability and advocacy are key to accelerating progress towards universal health coverage.

## **Health is a Political Choice:**

### **The Future of Health Policy in the G7/G20 and other Political Venues**

Healthcare has developed into a key national and international policy issue. The 2019 G20 in Osaka, Japan includes a meeting of health ministers on topics like health security and antimicrobial resistance, as well as a joint meeting of finance and health ministers. The health governance issues inherent in the Sustainable Development Goals have underlined how increasing financial and political commitments are central to solving global health challenges. The G7 will focus on issues of inequality, including access to health. Health also featured strongly at the 2019 UNGA and is part of the BRICS deliberations, and there is an opportunity to give health a higher profile in upcoming EU presidencies. These complementary agendas can support the SDG-approach to address current and future social, economic, and environmental challenges.

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**SDG3:****The Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All**

The success of the SDGs will be measured by their impact on the prosperity and well-being of people and the planet, particularly the extent to which they “leave no one behind.” Initiatives such as the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All endeavor to build a foundation of greater cohesion among global health actors to support countries in their achievement of the SDGs. The action plan was launched at the World Health Summit 2018. The World Health Summit 2019 will include a report on its progress and the implementation challenges at hand.

**Focus Africa:****Building Capacities and Strong Institutions**

United Nations Member States have a shared commitment and a common interest in achieving the SDGs by 2030. This will require significant investment, innovation, and partnerships in Africa. Integrated approaches to health, development and security, consensus building, information sharing, and knowledge exchange will all be key. The African Union has made health one of its priorities, and there is increasing political commitment to investing in health in a number of African countries.

**Digital Health:****Shaping Society and the Modern Economy**

A growing, ageing global population will have a profound impact across the world. Health spending is predicted to rise to \$9.3 trillion by 2018. New technological developments are responding and increasingly blurring the boundaries between the physical, biological, and digital worlds. Technology aims to personalize medicine and tailor treatments to individual patients based on their genetic makeup. The digital revolution has the potential improve health and empower patients, but it could also increase health inequities and lead to new ethical challenges.