Mexico City, 2 April, 2012

Mexico City Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage:
Sustaining universal health coverage: sharing experiences and promoting progress

Preamble

On the occasion of the Forum on Universal Health Coverage aimed towards the exchange of ideas and best practices to sustain progress towards universal health coverage, the Ministers, High-Level Officials and Representatives of the participating states:

- Reaffirm the WHO constitution and its preamble stating that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition”, the Declaration of Alma-Ata, which in paragraph 5 affirmed the responsibility of governments for the health of their peoples and in paragraph 6 declared that primary health care should be made universally accessible, and the principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in paragraph 1, article 25 affirms that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services”;

- Reaffirm Resolution WHA64.9 on Sustainable health financing structures and universal coverage, from the 64th World Health Assembly (May 2011), and take into consideration WHO’s World Health Report 2010 on Health systems financing: the path to universal coverage, that urge countries to design their health financing systems to ensure access to necessary health services for all people while concurrently protecting users from exposure to financial hardship;

- Reaffirm the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants, which includes recognition of the need to combat unequal access to health systems and pledges to support social protection floors as defined by countries to address their specific needs; and which in paragraph 7 notes that: “Good health requires a universal, comprehensive, equitable, effective, responsive and accessible quality health system.” (Rio de Janeiro, October 2011).

- Recall the Bangkok Statement on Universal Health Coverage (January 2012), which agrees to make universal health coverage a reality and to ensure better health for all, and advocates the importance of integrating it into forthcoming
United Nations and other high-level meetings related to health or social development, including the United Nations General Assembly, and promoting its inclusion as a priority in the global development agenda.

**Principles and values:**

1. Recognize that the State has an obligation to ensure the progressive realization of the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as a necessary condition for achieving sustainable and equitable socio-economic development and population well-being.

2. Accept that to progressively realize this right, governments should also focus on the social determinants of health through a variety of means, including policies and actions to achieve sustainable and equitable socio-economic development and population well-being, and to have effective social protection systems in health that commit to financial protection and to prevention, promotion, care and rehabilitation of the population.

3. Realize equal access to necessary health care services that are acceptable, affordable, accessible and of quality as a central objective, particularly for women and girls.

4. Emphasize that universal coverage is an essential component of sustainable development: access to health services enables people to maintain their health, in turn making them better equipped to achieve other milestones for social development, such as education, work income and household financial security; protection against the financial risks of falling ill so that impoverishment due to health care costs does not occur; and recognizing the importance of nationally-designed social protection floors for that purpose.

5. Recognize that access to affordable, quality, safe and efficacious health products, including medicines, is key to promoting the achievement and sustainability of Universal Health Coverage.

6. Recognize that increasing the awareness and health literacy of the population on the Right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health as one of the major components of the achievement of universal health coverage.

7. Value the efforts of governments and civil society, including academic institutions and the private sector, to make progress within their health systems towards
universal health coverage, irrespective of a country’s level of economic development.

8. Recognize that there are diverse ways of reaching universal health coverage, and choices should be made within the particular population health, macroeconomic, sociocultural and political context of each country.

9. Acknowledge the importance of prevention and health promotion for the long-term sustainability of universal health care, and in this respect, recognize the important role to be played by sectors of Government other than the Health Ministries in order to assure cost effective, universal health coverage for all.

10. Recognize that in order to sustain progress towards more equitable health financing systems, it is essential to take into consideration the needs of vulnerable groups, always considering the principle of social inclusion, to enhance their ability to realize their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.

11. Encourage the involvement of indigenous peoples and communities in the development, implementation, and evaluation of health systems, policies, plans and programs where appropriate, while promoting the development and strengthening of capacities at various levels and recognizing the cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

12. Consider that although countries have realized important achievements, all countries have scope for further improvements in their health financing policies to enhance and sustain more efficient, equitable, inclusive and high quality health systems for their populations.

Call upon governments, civil society organizations and international organizations to:

A. Work to promote the inclusion of universal health coverage as an important element in the international development agenda and in the internationally agreed development goals, as a means to promote sustainable growth, social cohesion and population well-being.

B. Engage in and promote cooperation at all levels among governmental agencies, inter-governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations, as well as civil society, including academic institutions and the private sector, in order to
face diverse population health, social and economic challenges to sustain progress towards universal coverage, as for example in the Providing for Health Initiative (P4H).

C. Work together in our own countries on the development and use of transparent financial mechanisms, accountability and reporting, and monitoring and measuring of health system performance and outcomes, as such actions support the progressive realization of universal health coverage in an efficient, sustainable, and publicly accountable manner.

D. Promote international cooperation to support countries that are working towards the realization of universal health coverage for their population.

E. Exchange experiences and best practices, adding to the global body of evidence that can help our and other countries to enhance their capacity to sustain achievements and face challenges, as well as to develop new solutions to progressively realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health for all through sustainable universal health coverage.