Why and how to approach UHC in Africa from a public finance perspective?
The overall objective of the 4th biennial AfHEA Conference is to promote debate and discussion among African and international researchers, experts and policy makers regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the ‘Grand Convergence’ and the African health agenda. Seven themes have been pre-identified to serve as a guide for the technical organization of the conference, among which “financing the SDGs” is a critical topic for research and policy development in Africa, in a context of declining health aid and the need to re-focus on mobilizing and using better existing domestic resources.

Most of the resources for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) should come from public budgets to maximize coverage outputs. Sub-Saharan African countries have limited fiscal capacity due to structural and contextual factors. Therefore, optimizing how public funds for health are managed and flow through the system is critical for achieving the UHC objectives within the available resource envelop. Strengthening public financial management systems can ensure that public, as well as external, funds available for health flow to and are effectively used for priority populations, programs and services to meet the UHC goals and to serve public financial accountability and transparency at the same time. Also, expanding fiscal space for health is not limited to introducing new revenue-raising mechanisms; it may also consist in freeing up resources from the exiting envelope through a better allocation and efficient use of already available resources.

The objectives of the pre-conference workshop are to:

- Approach the UHC research and policy agenda from a public finance perspective;
- Provide evidence of successful public finance and budgeting reforms at country level serving the UHC goals in Africa;
- Strengthen technical knowledge and capacities on how to approach, analyse and address fiscal space, public finance and budgeting challenges for future research and policy work in the context of health financing reforms toward UHC in Africa.

The workshop is organized by the World Health Organization, with support from Afhea. Financial support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) under the Program for Improving Countries’ Health Financing Systems to Accelerate Progress towards Universal Health Coverage, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea under the Tripartite Program on Strengthening Health Financing Systems for Universal Health Coverage.
2. Agenda

8:30-9:00: Registration and breakfast served

9:00-9:20: Opening session

Chris Atim, Executive Director, Afhea

WHO: Quick overview of the workshop

9:20-10:30: Setting the scene: Health financing, public finance and Universal Health Coverage in Africa

Joe Kutzin, Coordinator, Health Financing Unit, World Health Organization: Why does public finance matter for UHC?

Health Barroy, Senior Health Financing Specialist, World Health Organization: Public financing for health in Africa: from Abuja to the SDGs

Discussion

10:30-10:50: Coffee break

10:50-12:45: Fiscal space for health in Africa: The holy grail for Universal Health Coverage?

Chair: Joe Kutzin, Coordinator, Health Financing Unit, World Health Organization

Helene Barroy, Senior Health Financing Specialist, World Health Organization: Taking stock of fiscal space for health in sub-Saharan Africa

Tania Bissouma-Ledjou, Technical officer, World Health Organization/Cote d'Ivoire: Projecting fiscal space for health in Cote d'Ivoire: Efficiency gains as the main drivers

Jane Doherty, RESYST/LSHTM: Documenting South Africa experience in increasing the effectiveness of domestic tax collection systems to expand sector resources

Ogochukwu Chukwujekwu, Technical officer, World Health Organization/AFRO: How does decentralization drive fiscal space for health expansion in the context of Nigeria?
Discussion

12:40-13:45: Lunch

**13:45-15:30: Role of Public Financial Management in sustainable health financing reforms toward Universal Health Coverage in Africa**

Chair: Renaud Seligmann, Practice Manager, Governance, World Bank

Nadia Benali, Chief, Social sectors, Ministry of Finance/Morocco: *Quality of public expenditure for health and PFM reforms in Morocco*

Grace Kabaniha, Technical Officer, World Health Organization/AFRO: *Effects of recent PFM reforms on public expenditure for health in Uganda*

Benjamin Tsofa, Director, KEMRI/Wellcome Trust Kenya: *How does decentralisation affect health sector planning, budgeting and overall PFM? A case study of early effects of devolution on Kilifi County, Kenya*

Discussion

**15:30-16:00: WHO health financing guidance materials**

Quick presentation of WHO health financing guidance materials, tools, and reviews

16:00-16:15: Coffee break

**16:15-16:45: Concluding remarks**