

‘Universal Health Coverage: Moving together to build a healthier world’

Statement

by

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Chair,
Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Morning/Evening.

I am happy to speak to you on the issue of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Health is an integral part of our development journey. It is essential for continued economic and social progress. Therefore ensuring ‘Universal Health Coverage’ for all has assumed greater importance. The ‘Universal Health Coverage’ also helps ensure access to quality health services without adding financial hardship on the disadvantaged people in particular. In Bangladesh, in the face of all constraints and limitations, we have developed innovative ways to ensure universal health coverage for all.

Excellencies,

Our comprehensive support to health sector today include risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all. We had also promised to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by one third through prevention and treatment as well as to promote mental health and well-being by 2030. When we assumed office first time in 1996, we accorded high priority to strengthening local community health services. Acknowledging the critical role of health services at the grassroots level we introduced ‘**Community Health Clinics**’ (CHC) in 1998. These clinics are model of public-private partnership where the government provides skilled personnel, medicine and equipment and the local people provide the land for the clinic.

We plan to construct 14,890 community clinics all over the country especially in rural areas. So far 13,743 community clinics are functioning along with 4000 union health centres which provide services to approximately 600 thousand individuals daily. From these facilities 30 varieties of medicine and diabetes detection and monitoring kits are distributed free of charge. The clinics are accessible to 80% of the population and are located within 30 minutes walking distance of their residences. It is estimated that on an average 40 patients receive service from each clinic everyday and 90% of them are women and children.

Our efficient health planning and implementation has reduced maternal mortality to 172 per, infant mortality to 24 and under-5 mortalities to 31. In Bangladesh full vaccination coverage is now 82.3%, life expectancy is more than 72.8 years while fertility rate per woman has dropped to 2.1. We have made commendable success in elimination of tuberculosis and leprosy.

Our government has already integrated the health related SDG targets into our long-term development plans. Our ‘Visions 2021’ and 2041’ have given top priority to health security.

As per our election manifesto 2018, we are planning to expand the universal health coverage even further and make health service free for child under one year and for elders over 65 years.

Excellencies,

Benefits of universal health coverage are global and we need to work collectively. Collaboration amongst stakeholders around a common goal like universal health coverage is fundamental to our development. We should work together to achieve health for all.

I thank you all.