EU and World Health Organisation team up to boost access to health services in developing countries

The EU will sign a €102 million contribution agreement with the World Health Organisation (WHO) at the European Development Days in Brussels today. The EU will invest in building health care systems to provide quality services in more than 80 African, Caribbean, Pacific, and Asian countries.

The "Health Systems Strengthening for Universal Health Coverage Partnership Programme" launched today will benefit in a longer term from an EU overall contribution of €118 million out of a total budget of €123 million. The EU contribution will strengthen the WHO cooperation with governments and country stakeholders to build health care systems that provide quality health services to everyone.

Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica** said: *"With this contribution of €102 million we want to give a real boost to the ambitious goal of Universal Health Coverage for all by 2030. This initiative confirms the leading role of the European Union in putting these universal principles into practice and strengthening our partnership with the World Health Organisation"*.

"WHO has no higher priority than universal health coverage," said Dr Tedros Adhanom **Ghebreyesus**, WHO Director General. *"It not only improves health, it also helps to reduce poverty, drive inclusive economic growth and advance gender equality. I thank the European Union for its generous financial support for advancing Universal Health Coverage around the world through the EU-WHO UHC Partnership. I look forward to our continued partnership, and to even greater results."*

The EU's today financial contribution will:

- Help the WHO to strengthen national and regional capacities as regards key health system components, as well as governance, strategic planning and policy dialogue in this area;
- Facilitate the access to medicines and health products;
- Improve the health workforce, health financing, information about health and healthy lifestyles, and service delivery.

In addition, this programme will pay particular attention to addressing non-communicable diseases, which constitute an increasing health threat and a major global concern.

The new programme launched today builds upon the existing and highly successful EU flagship programme with the WHO, the 'UHC Partnership', which had started in 2011 and has since been joined and co-financed by Luxemburg, Ireland, France, Japan, and recently the United Kingdom and South Korea.

Background

The EU pursues a [rights-based approach to health](#), by supporting countries to design policies that maximise health benefits through the equitable treatment of all citizens.

The EU spends €1.3 billion in 17 bilateral health programmes and another €1.3 billion through Global Initiatives such as the Global Fund, GAVI, the Global Financing Facility, UNFPA supplies, and the WHO in the current financial framework (2014-2020).

During the 2013-2017 period, EU-funded interventions contributed to measurable improvements in quality primary health care. For example, thanks to skilled health personnel, EU funded interventions have supported more than 19 million births. Also, through EU funds more than 13 million children have been fully immunised, more than 57 million women could access contraception, 11 million people have access to life-saving treatment for HIV, and 600 million insecticide-treated bed nets were distributed.

In 2011 the EU and WHO embarked on an ambitious journey together, the UHC Partnership Programme. This programme has enabled both the EU and WHO to work much closer together at international level and at country level (between EU Delegations and WHO country offices), which led to efficiency gains for the respective country based programmes and proved to be a convincing business case for the WHO. In addition, EU-WHO partnership re-enforced the concept of strengthening health systems, especially at primary health care level, as one of the globally recognised drivers in the effort to achieve universal health coverage and thus the Sustainable Development Goal 3: "Ensure healthy lives and wellbeing at all ages".

For more information

[EU contribution to global health](#)

[European Development Days](#)