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**Closing Remarks**

**by**

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**of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations**

**at the Interactive Multi-stakeholder Hearing**

**for the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage**

***“Everything. Everywhere. All at once”:***

***An Approach Towards Realizing Universal Health Coverage***

**9 May 2023, UNHQ, New York**

Thank you very much Chair and Vice President.

I am overwhelmed with the passion, the creativity, the commitment, and the enthusiasm that all of you have expressed, and which has been underscored by Carolyn (Co-Facilitator from Guyana).

I am discarding my prepared notes because I want to talk a little bit from the heart.

And to reflect on some of your reflections as to how we move forward together. And perhaps be a little passionate about it, if I can join in.

After listening to all of you, I can only think of three phrases:

***Everything.***

***Everywhere.***

***All at once.***

Now, I am not referring to the Hollywood movie which has won the Oscars!

Rather, I am referring to some “starting point answers”, if I may call them, to some very critical questions about UHC that we have shared some views on.

Question: *What will be gained by UHC?*

Answer: ***Everything.***

Question: *Where do we need to promote UHC?*

Answer: ***Everywhere.***

Question: *How should we take forward our various ideas on UHC?*

Answer: ***All at once.*** That’s right.

I think these are not just catch words, dear friends, but a reflection of the important principles and ideas that you have mentioned.

From the people-centered approaches, to equity to healthcare being a human right – which it is, to it being a policy issue, a question about choice. From the use of digital tools to the use of disaggregated data.

All these are important elements of our efforts to realize UHC in different dimensions.

So let's just go a little bit into these questions.

***First, why is it that UHC is everything?***

Because simply, in my view, good health is everything.

As one of the panelists said, "healthy children learn, healthy adults earn".

Good health is life.

It is a foundation of sustainable development. It is a pathway out of poverty. And without sustainable development and good health, how can we have a sustainable future?

So that is why I believe that UHC is everything to all of us.

***Second, why is it that we need to promote UHC everywhere?***

It is very simple. It is because we need to involve everyone.

You are not safe until we are all safe through UHC. We are not secure from health challenges until we are all secure from health challenges through UHC. These are important safeguards.

And to do so, we need integrated efforts: here in New York and in Geneva.

We need integrated efforts across the three health summits, to which you are all contributing during these past few days.

And we need the participation of parliamentarians, doctors, community workers, health workers, people with ideas – ordinary people with extraordinary aspirations.

So these are the things that we need to work on together.

***And third, why do we need to do it all at once?***

Because there is urgency.

And not urgency in what we want to do in the future, but urgency in what we need to do now.

Moving all at once is not necessarily uncoordinated.

We can all do so in our respective arenas and forums – we have the global forum, we have the community forum. All of us do it together to tackle the different issues.

We need that participatory approach, which is critical in linking all our work together.

For example, in Thailand, the fact that Siriraj Hospital introduced the idea of having, as part of the UHC benefits package, hearing screening for newborn babies. An idea from a hospital which became part of our UHC package through a participatory approach.

*So. Everything. Everywhere. All at once.*

It may be late in the day but we have to keep on working.

Because we only have around 135 days left before the High-level Meeting on UHC in September, that is – with my arithmetic – 3,240 hours.

That is not too many. So we need your help to move things forward.

Let me just end with this.

There has been a lot of very good references to Martin Luther King by the President of the General Assembly and others, quoting different aspects. I am just going to focus on one.

If you may recall one of his most famous statements is “I have a dream”. That dream was about racial equality.

But I believe that we also have a dream here. And our dream is to have UHC being realized.

Because UHC is a great equalizer – to bridge gaps, to overcome inequities, and most importantly to give us all a better chance.

For every ordinary person to have a better chance at life, and having a better life for themselves and for their children.

And is that not a dream worth realizing for?

So join us, help us.

And we look forward to a successful, results-oriented, people-centered, equitable Political Declaration and follow-up in September, 135 days from now.

Thank you very much.

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